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NEW STATESMAN

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

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Julian Barnes: Onassis

F. S. L. Lyons on The Damnable Question

Lorna Sage on Roald Dahl and Richard Hughes

Eating the Seed Corn

The miners are – in Charles Pannell's memorable phrase – 'the Brigade of Guards of the Labour movement'. It was never very likely that they would accept a scheme, however enticingly packaged, which jeopardised their unity and solidarity by setting shift against shift. Their recent vote, though, has another significance. For all the revival of its public image since the stifling warmth of the Brighton conference, the Government is fast using up its credit of working-class confidence. And, even where a combination of bluff and subsidy is deployed (as in the case of British Leyland), the resulting compromise is a poor thing, lamed by lack of real unanimity and liable to be crippled by wrong forecasting of the market. Even the British Oxygen workforce, who are a special case by virtue of their arterial role in British industry, cannot easily be pacified within the existing pay limit.

In this context, the Chancellor's decision to take yet another leaf out of the Tory Party's book (how much more of this pilfering can Sir Keith and Sir Geoffrey take?) is more than anything else an irrelevance. The parity of sterling is no less vulnerable to the jumpiness of politically ignorant speculators than it was before. By Christmas we could be back on that treadmill again. No change in the reserve position of the currency – hinted at by the Prime Minister when the roof last fell in – is even contemplated. Now there is fresh interest to pay, and a new spate of import penetration to be absorbed. The country's industrial topsoil continues to be blown away by every passing breeze.

The Leyland crisis is an apt enough illustration of the real problem. While yet another short-sleeved dynamo succeeds yet another knighted buffoon (representing the pendulum opposites of British management), the company's share of the market continues to decline, and cannot be helped by the latest Treasury decision to make exports dearer. Indeed, the reservations of the CBI about the revaluation move speak volumes in themselves. The wasteful and competitive character of the international automobile market has led to grotesque over-capacity everywhere, but most especially in the United Kingdom. Lord Ryder's bland assumption that Leyland would retain a third share of the market has been allowed to become the basis of forward planning. Since the assumption is so breathtakingly optimistic as to be almost falsified already, and since the contingent profitability has not been forthcoming, Leyland remains a ravenous charge on the public, with new models going off at half-cock and a workforce disciplined only by the threat of even more redundancy.

What strikes the eye in any study of the next Parliament's programme is the glaring absence of any industrial strategy at all. Perhaps the cabinet hopes that some 'hidden hand' will intervene and square the circle of employment, productivity and wages. Perhaps they think it already has, and that that is why there has not been any major dispute lately. Perhaps they are simply mesmerised by Mr Callaghan's standing in the opinion polls. This euphoria could be terminally punctured at any time by one of a number of 'shelved' issues.

The skilled toolmakers at Leyland may easily revive their demands and their autonomous leadership. The miners may well decide that sentimentality about a Labour Government is not as rewarding as cash down. Other long-postponed claims can be envisaged. And no doubt when *that* happens Mr Healey will call for restraint. And call for it on the grounds that the hot money which he has just let in will run away again if it finds matters have not been arranged to its liking. If this Government continues to postpone industrial rebuilding in favour of a purely financial recovery; if, as this week, it feeds consumption and not production, it will find there is no seed corn to eat.

No better indication of this could be given than the one we heard last week from the Governor of the Bank of England. His view of the forthcoming oil revenues is that they should be primarily used to repay debt and acquire overseas assets. Many more steps along that road will be fatal. A few more of these successes will extinguish Britain as a producing nation.

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Spotlight on Politics

James Fenton

It's a Blackout!

London looks very much like the economy at the moment. Some parts are blazing with light. Others are plunged into a deep Cimmerian gloom. Whitehall looks terrific. An emergency generator pours forth theatrical smog, and visibility is suddenly reduced to a few feet. But not all Departments have emergency provisions. On Tuesday night I groped my way up about ten floors in a vast benighted block. It was just like Hades. The occasional face of a lost civil servant would flicker past, in the match-light, the dead souls were whispering on the stairs – 'Are you on the outside?' 'I'm sticking to the banister.' 'Good.' In one office, I came across a Secretary of State, reading the *Evening Standard* report on the miners' ballot. He had been allotted two candles, as a mark of respect. Observing his features, lit from beneath, I though how terrifying life must be in the Treasury at the moment. Imagine knowing, positively and for certain, that Denis Healey was somewhere in the same room. Or imagine being in the Department of Trade, reaching out gingerly and suddenly touching, actually *touching*, Edmund Dell. Or imagine striking a match and seeing the gleaming head of Gerald Kaufman. Or imagine being anybody's secretary when the lights went out.

Such are the terrors of contemporary political life. The economy, as I said, is similar. From blaze to blackout, from blackout to blaze, from the rising pound to the miners' ballot. The economy is like a manic depressive: those who know it well are fearful of those moments when it begins to gabble away cheerfully; they know the signs of a seizure. They do not trust its optimism. They do not believe its pessimism. They do their best to keep it calm. All goes well for a week and then one day, without warning, it kicks off its shoes and jumps onto the table with a rose between its teeth. 'Champagne all round,' it cries out to the barman, and the hips of the economy begin to sway. The friends of the economy take the barman on one side, and countermand the order.

Those of us who study these things closely, and are therefore never surprised, knew at once (although we did not say so, I know) that when Healey's minibudget last week omitted any modification of exchange controls, the pound was going to have to rise. We knew it in our intellects. We felt it in our bones. We knew that when Healey said he would maintain sterling at approximately its present level, what he meant was that he would not do this. We knew of a secret meeting between Healey, Harold Lever and the Prime Minister, the previous Friday, at which the decision was taken. Our sources in the cabinet, when leaking the contents of the package to us on the Monday of last week, after the cabinet meeting, could see quite clearly what was going to happen. We noted also, last Friday, the second secret meeting of the terrible trio, at which the timing was decided. We were thus only slightly miffed that the story fell into the *Observer*'s lap.

All in all, we are quite pleased. We note that, although the decision was not discussed in cabinet, the division on the matter would not have been between Left and Right. Only six opinions are known for certain. Callaghan, Healey, Lever and Hattersley were in favour. Owen and Dell were against. Owen was against, we believe, on the basis of advice from a certain Michael Stewart, son-in-law of Lord Kaldor. Lord Kaldor, on the other hand, is a recent convert to the rising pound. Perhaps the advice was a little out of date. Of those in favour, Lever had wanted the pound set free as soon as the safety net had been put in place last year. Hattersley had become a convert last July, and had both raised the possibility in public and lobbied for it in private. The other two conversions are much more recent. Although the impression of one Treasury official was that the Government had had its hand forced by speculation in the press and in the markets, this is not the feeling of our cabinet sources. Nor is it true, as the *Express* put it around, that Healey was angry at the decision, and threatened to resign. Indeed, it would have been highly eccentric of the Blob to do so, after sticking through all the humiliations.

It is perhaps peculiar that a decision of such importance should have been taken without any cabinet discussion, but there it is. Tony Benn, we suspect, will be secretly pleased; Michael Foot's reaction is mysterious. Hattersley's personal and departmental interest ensures that he will be thrilled. The Treasury is not entirely thrilled, but nor is it horrified. It is not true that all exporters will be throwing up their hands in dismay. In many firms, the decreased price of raw materials will more or less offset the increased value of the pound. And besides, as those concerned with promoting exports wearily point out, the major problem with exports is not price competitiveness but efficiency.

Politically, of course, the appreciation of the pound is a godsend. It provides yet another item of good news for the public to chew over, and yet another opportunity for the Tories to say, 'Look, for crying out loud, that's what *we* said you should do.' I do not think that these moans do the Tories much good. They merely increase the public impression that the Government is behaving according to the dictates of common sense. Finally, there must be very few people in the country who, when asked the question 'Should the pound be allowed to rise?', would answer 'No'.

Parliament reassembles this week, then, with a rather bumptious Labour Party. Unfortunately, the legislative programme looks as if its going to be very, very dull indeed, unless you're the type that really wants to go through the devolution debate all over again, or unless the choice between the regional list and first-past-the-post is the sort of subject that grips you by the throat and throws you across the room. Absent from the Queen's Speech is any mention of legislation on the Bullock proposals – the major remaining commitment of the Government. It is absent because there is no way of getting it past the Liberals; it will have to wait for a Labour majority. A question of some political interest is the proposed legislation to establish or clarify the postman's right to strike. This has not yet been discussed with the Liberals, but Foot is keen to get it through. Then there will be that famous free vote on the method of election to the European Parliament, which is the rock on which the Mayhew school of Liberals hope to wreck the pact. Foot's position is that David Steel can hardly agree to a free vote, and then object to the outcome. A free vote, he argues, is a free vote. Mayhew, on the other hand, does not see things this way. If the regional list system is not carried, he proposes to send out a letter to 500 Liberal chairmen, calling for the re-convening of the Liberal Assembly. At the assembly, if it comes, he proposes to scrap the pact – not to bring the Government down at once, but to put matters on a day-to-day footing. Then, when the Government is attempting something unpopular, the Liberals will pull the plug.

What a load of moonshine this is. 'Mayhew!' said a senior member of the cabinet to me this week, 'Mayhew and Prentice! It's difficult to know which party got the worse deal.' He thought for a moment. 'I think that *marginally* I would prefer Prentice.' Certainly the sight of Prentice on the Tory benches will prove one of the more diverting spectacles of the next session. Another spectacle, of which we've already had a glimpse, is that of former Tribunite, Oonagh McDonald, as PPS to Joel Barnett (who, I forgot to say earlier, was unhappy about the revaluation of the pound, although not so much so as some Treasury officials). Oh Oonagh! First rung of the ladder, eh? I knew this would happen soonagh or latagh.

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Jeremy Bugler

Nuclear Civil War

British in its secretive beginnings, British in its final days, the Windscale inquiry wraps up this week with an end-of-inquiry party ('Disco. Buffet. Cabaret.') in which pro-nukes fraternise with anti-nukes, muted atomic echo of General Strikers footballing with police. A 29-foot stack of inquiry documents, numbness of brain and bottom from one hundred days of hearings, £2m. spent and the question endlessly asked: What will Parker say?

Mr Justice Parker, the inquiry inspector who has revealed great sharpness of mind and a slightly worrying tendency to pooh-pooh, may say all manner and variety of things in the report he will send to the Government early next year. He may say yes to British Nuclear Fuel's reprocessing plant, or yes – but, or no, or no – but. Betting is on yes – but, but. What commentators, in their speculations, may be missing is that it matters much more what the Government will say. What happens to the Windscale plan will be a decision of the politicians, not of the Parker.

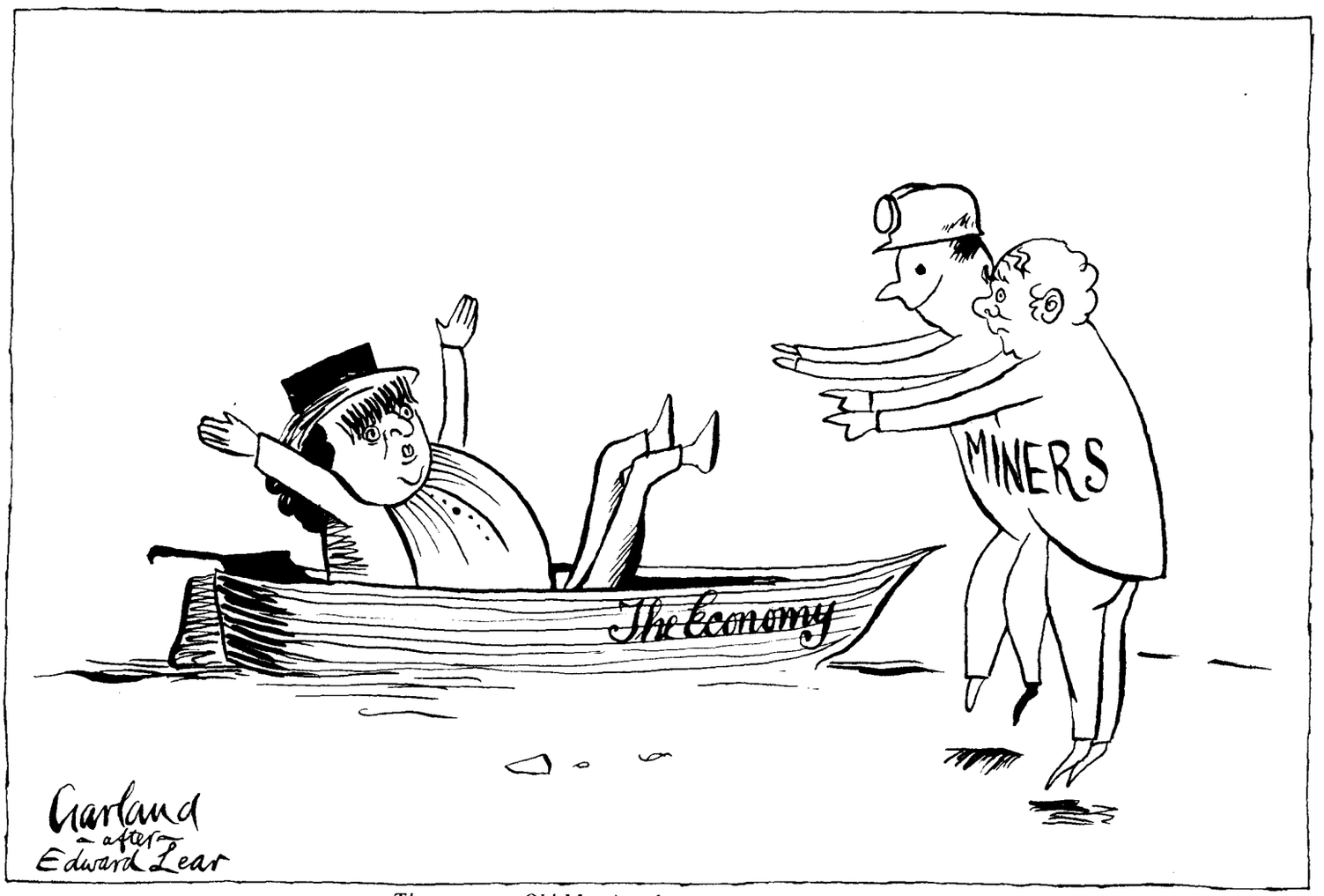
A noisy revelation of some Government thinking is coming from Australia, where Dickson Mabon, one of the three junior Energy ministers, has crashed into the Australian election. The Australian Labour Party is strongly opposed to exporting the nation's uranium, which mounts up to about 20 per cent of the West's supply. Fraser's Government plans to flog it and prosper.

Mabon, giving short shrift to international Labour solidarity and all that, made a speech in Australia last week in which he came out right behind Fraser's plan to export the yellowcake. Mabon went so far as to say : 'The future prospects of Britain depend directly on the long-term supply of Australian uranium.' It was needed, he said, if Britain is to maintain its position as a major industrial power.

There is both less and more to this than meets the eye. The future prosperity of Britain, thankfully, only rests in Australian uranium if a whole series of other decisions, greatly expanding our nuclear-electric industry, are taken. But Mabon is no man's fool and he must have known the fury in Australian Labour that he was going to cause. In his mission to Australia to assess the uranium politics, he may well have born in his mind what the effect might be if next year the Government approves the Windscale reprocessing plant. At least two suppliers of uranium, Canada and the United States, then might feel unwilling to ship it to the UK, since both nations are opposed to reprocessing and its consequence, the fast-breeder fuel system. Another supplier, Namibia, is uncertain, too. That leaves the Australian resources, and Britain's need to know it can rely upon them, even if that means dishing Australian Labour.

Dickson Mabon's speech reflects the Department of Energy, his stable. There the principal Under-Secretary, Sir Jack Rampton, is a believer in the whole litany of a growing nuclear programme, a looming energy gap and so on even up to a whole fast-breeder reactor system. The other junior ministers, Alex Eadie and John Cunningham, are pro-nuclear, with Cunningham, effectively Windscale's MP, bearing out in every speech the ill-wisdom of giving an MP a post in an area of government where his constituency has a special interest. At the recent Royal Institution forum on nuclear energy, Cunningham not only gave out the now sanitized reference to the breeder ('the fast reactor') but made a blatant appeal for haste in reaching decisions.

Tony Benn is continuing to be an enigma. Believed to be sceptical about the need for the vast reprocessing plant and repeating at the forum that we have a few years before we need take some of the



There was an Old Man in a boat,
Who said, 'I'm afloat! I'm afloat!'
When they said, 'No! you ain't!' he was ready to faint,
That unhappy Old Man in a boat.

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critical nuclear decisions (although the decisions on thermal reactors is due in a month or so) Benn then announced his choices for the new 24-man Energy Commission, to advise him on energy strategy. They include almost all the strong men of the nuclear lobby, a few token consumer people and not one nuclear sceptic – no Gerald Leach, no Professor Rotblat, no Peter Chapman. Perhaps a condition of appointment was proof of an affiliation to the Atomic Industrial Forum.

It will be unsafe to rely on Benn to stop people bringing home the nuclear bacon, particularly given his belief in the centralised industrial society and presumably 'the great blocks of power', to quote Arthur Palmer, needed to fuel it. The Treasury is also an uncertain long-stop. It may not like the sloppy financing of the Windscale project, for even if the Japanese half of the plan turned out to be tightly-negotiated and loophole-proof, the economics of building the plant for British fuel reprocessing became more battered as the inquiry went on. The Treasury may wonder about the wisdom of allowing British Nuclear Fuels to go ahead with the huge plant on the basis of 1: 5000 pilot designs.

Against this, the Treasury has a pro-nuclear cast of mind because it views nuclear energy as a lovely way of pulling the rug from under the miners and destroying their effect on national wage bargaining. In Treasury terms, they'd much rather be blackmailed by a few hundred of John Lyon's power engineers than several thousand of Scargill's miners (a fact not lost on Arthur Scargill, an anti-nuke witness at Windscale's inquiry).

The TUC and the trade unions represent powerful under-pinning of the nuclear lobby, partly because they share Benn's vision of a future of mega-sized industrial plants fuelled by central power stations. Men like Frank Chapple and Hugh Scanlon are either not aware of, or they reject the increasing evidence, put out at the inquiry by the Socialist Environment and Resources Association, that an alternative energy programme could create, on US data, some two and a half times as many jobs as a nuclear programme. It may need the rank-and-file to realise this possibility before we see any change in the leadership's view.

Remembering that most of the cabinet was opposed, in the first place, to holding a Windscale public inquiry until Peter Shore pressed them, it might seem that the pro-nukes have nothing to halt them, apart from the unmighty Department of the Environment. Two barriers, however, remain: Callaghan and the Foreign Office, and a changing public mood. Any straight decision to go ahead, wham, with the reprocessing plant poses Callaghan enormous foreign policy problems. He has fostered his relationship with Carter, and David Owen most vocally supported Carter's ban on reprocessing and development of breeder technology. A simple approval of BNFL's plant can only be a slap in the face for Carter, and a crude display of really how much Britain does care about halting nuclear weapons proliferation when it comes to inconveniencing the only Western nation that will be self-sufficient in energy for the next two decades.

Callaghan's outlet may be to say 'Infcep', short for the International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Evaluation Programme, the first conference of which Carter inaugurated in Washington last month. The job of Infcep is to prepare an analysis of nuclear fuel cycles from a non-proliferation point of view. It will be looking at ways in which the nuclear fuel cycle can be closed without the spread of bombs. Possibilities are the international control of national nuclear facilities or even new massive multinational fuel cycle centres. Forty nations are studying technical ways to stop proliferation, and Britain, usefully, is co-chairing with Japan the working group studying reprocessing, plutonium handling and recycling.

It would be politic, to say the least, not to plunge ahead with one of the world's largest reprocessing plants while Infcep is doing its work. That will take two years, a useful delay-time in which British Nuclear Fuels can study ways of storing used fuel on a longer term basis and get round to admitting that reprocessing won't make waste disposal any easier. If national needs became so pressing and the fuel ponds were overflowing, the existing 'Head-End' plant at Windscale could be 'refurbished', in Walter Annenberg's parlance. The Big One could wait.

Friends of the Earth at Windscale are calling for a ten-year delay before we venture into reprocessing. The Friends believe that such a delay will not seriously disrupt our future fuel supplies, and will give a chance for non-proliferation policies and the alternative energies to show their worth. Ten years is much longer than any government could agree to now, but perhaps we can proceed by stages, a two year relay for Infcep and then an assessment.

Delay is at the core of this matter. The nuclear lobby sees its chance of a large future dwindling as Britain's public wakes to the dangers of nuclear energy after its long self-satisfied, Calder-Hall-We-Started-It-All slumber. Hence the urging and haste in the speeches of Sir John Hill, Frank Toombs, John Cunningham; in two years' time, energy demand may have been revised downwards several more times, the alternatives showing up well, and the public rejecting the so-called Faustian bargain (eternal vigilance in return for unending energy).

One man, Peter Taylor of the Oxford-based Political Ecology Research Group, made this crucial point at Windscale: that public opinion, 'irrational' and even ignorant, may come so to dislike nuclear power, however small its one-in-a-million, meteor-hitting-Trafalgar-Square chances of going wrong, that politicians will find this dislike sufficient reason to abandon nuclear power. Nuclear politics may prove to be the art of the impossible.

Peter Taylor

The Castlereagh Allegations

The mud that was slung at the *This Week* programme on Castlereagh by the RUC and Roy Mason, heavily reinforced by Airey Neave, appears to have successfully diverted attention from the issue raised by the programme: is there ill-treatment of suspects held in custody at the RUC's interrogation centre at Castlereagh?

The hysteria that the programme produced was predictable and understandable. It challenged, as did Keith Kyle's BBC interview with Bernard O'Connor earlier this year, one of the cardinal principles of counter-insurgency expressed by its guru Brigadier Frank Kitson: that public opinion should be educated by 'trying to inform and influence the existing news media'. (Kitson devotees should also note that in the same essay he goes on to say that everything done by a government and its agents in combating insurgency must be legal.)

Increasingly in Northern Ireland there is bound to be friction between government and journalists as they investigate sensitive corners of security policy. Regardless of how it may appear to those on the receiving end, to question the foundation of Roy Mason's unquestionably successful security policy is not meant to undermine the Government's efforts in Northern Ireland, nor is it designed to provide, as Airey Neave suggests, the 'propaganda tonic needed to revive the flagging spirit of terrorism'. Even the Chief Constable of the RUC, Mr Kenneth Newman, admits that he does not wish to stifle 'legitimate public interest in the police'. Nevertheless he does not appear to believe that allegations of ill-treatment at Castlereagh constitute 'legitimate public interest'. If anxieties expressed by many doctors and lawyers, and even by members of the judiciary itself, do not give Messrs Newman and Mason cause for concern, then what does?

Unfortunately, we've been along this road before. A decade ago, Amnesty put the Wilson government on the spot over the operation of the Fort Morbut interrogation centre in Aden. The official inquiry that followed was disturbing but not damaging: it reported 'a most regrettable failure to deal expeditiously and adequately with allegations of cruelty' but concluded that only three 'bad apples' were involved – a convenient fiction to suggest that no one's to blame. Ted Heath's government was embarrassed by the interrogation pro-

Last week's issue

We would like to apologise to readers who could not obtain their copy of last week's NS at the usual time. This was because of a major machine breakdown which delayed production by 16 hours and caused unavoidable delays in distribution.

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cedures used in the aftermath of internment in 1971. Lord Gardiner's minority view, expressed in the Parker report, did not make comfortable reading. The former Lord Chancellor was not deflected by specious arguments that the procedures were 'morally justifiable' because they produced information 'for the purpose of saving lives'. He concluded that these techniques 'were and are illegal', a judgment confirmed by the European Commission of Human Rights last year when it found the British Government guilty of 'torture, inhuman and degrading treatment'.

Wall standing, or 'spreadeagling', was one of the five methods deemed illegal at Strasbourg, when taken in conjunction with the other four techniques – hooding, noise, and deprivation of food and sleep. Spreadeagling is the most common practice referred to in the Castlereagh allegations. A suspect is made to stand against the wall with his legs apart and feet well back, his weight resting on his fingers, whilst, it is said, he is punched around the head and stomach and kicked on the shins and testicles. The object of this alleged exercise and others is to extract a statement from the suspect, in which he confesses to terrorist crimes. This statement is then admissible as evidence in court provided the judge is convinced that, under Section 6 of the Emergency Provisions Act, 'torture, inhuman or degrading treatment' was not used to extract it. As over 80 per cent of cases currently coming before the special non-jury courts are based on these confessions made in police custody, the pressure on Special Branch and Regional Crime Squads to get statements is understandable. A cup of tea and a chat is hardly likely to induce a hardened Provo to bare his soul to his captors.

The more refined techniques of 1971 appear, in the main, to be absent as far as Castlereagh is concerned. There are no hoods and noise – except, if some of the more lurid stories are true, the screams that come from other interrogations. If there is ill-treatment, it is probably low-level, except when an interrogator loses his temper or, as Mr Newman more delicately puts it, when 'human frailty may lead an individual to fall short of the high standards laid down'. When that happens, the chances are that the judge will rule the defendant's statement inadmissible because the signs of ill-treatment are obvious. Cigarette burns and a bloody nose gave two men their freedom earlier this summer instead of up to 30 years in gaol. Not surprisingly, judges are concerned that a few over-zealous policemen are forcing them to acquit men they believe should be behind bars.

But medical evidence tends to be less dramatic. The usual pattern of doctors' reports shows bruising and little else. There may be a reason for this: almost all of those who pass through Castlereagh point out that three walls of the interrogation room are made of pinboard type material so, they claim, the marks don't show. It could be, of course, that they're just built that way.

Another common allegation is wrist bending: this is painful but leaves no marks, unless someone goes too far. In August a police surgeon, (the doctors who examine suspect on behalf of the RUC and whose silence on this issue has been deafening) sent one 17 year old straight from Castlereagh to the Ulster Hospital, where the casualty officer put his wrist in a plaster cast. Common too are stories of suspects being bent backwards over the seat of a chair and then forced to squat with their backs to the wall until they collapse. Time and again, doctors' reports conclude that the injuries are consistent with the treatment the patient alleges he received in custody. Questioned about their findings, few doctors believe that the injuries are self-inflicted. Nevertheless, human frailty aside, the Chief Constable insists that the injuries are self-inflicted, designed either to get the accused off under Section 6 or, in case he has squealed, to protect his head or his kneecaps from the attention of his paramilitary bosses outside.

If the Chief Constable is right, then a lot of policemen let a lot of suspects do themselves a lot of damage whilst in police custody at Castlereagh. Unquestionably some injuries are self-inflicted, although perhaps not to the degree suggested by one policeman outside Castlereagh, who said he often looked through the cell windows and saw prisoners banging their heads against the wall. A Belfast GP commented that such methods of self-infliction made about as much sense as taking a hammer to a fly in a china cabinet. No judge would believe that interrogation was so messy.

Recently a worried police surgeon, who'd given evidence at Strasbourg, confided in the same GP that he didn't want to do so again. He said he feared they might ask him the question they spared him last time. His friend asked him what it was. 'They asked me if I knew what had been going on and I said that I did' replied the police surgeon. 'They never asked me what I did about it.'

John Gretton

Sacrificing the Saharans

Tens of thousands – perhaps 100,000 or more – of desert nomads of the Western Sahara are today surviving, thanks to Algeria. Most of them are living, however inadequately, on Algerian soil, dependent for their daily bread on Algerian and international charity. A small, brave and remarkably successful fringe are fighting the armies of Morocco and Mauritania, which are supplied and financed by America, France, Russia and Saudi Arabia, for their homeland, the former Spanish Sahara.

These are the people, known as the Polisario, who have singed the President of France's beard by capturing two French technicians on Mauritanian soil – though

in an area that the guerrillas have long since designated a 'war zone'. The total number of French prisoners held by the Polisario is now 8 or 13, depending on what happened to five students who disappeared in the Sahara nearly two years ago. So far nobody has asked, in this case, precisely what Frenchmen were doing carrying out repair work on the exposed Zouératé – Nouadhibou railway-line which links the iron-ore mines to the coast. It has been frequently attacked by the Polisario and the Mauritanian army is now too demoralised even to make the slightest show of protecting it.

France, of course, has consistently supported Morocco and Mauritania against Algeria and the Polisario; as a result of all this week's sabre-rattling, it may step up its military aid to Mauritania. But the most likely outcome is renewed and intense pressure on Algeria, and through Algeria on the Polisario, to negotiate a settlement. So far, the Polisario have remained intransient and Algeria, publicly at least, is refusing to accept mediation. The best the Polisario could expect from a settlement, given the impossibility of shifting Morocco's position, would be some form of control over the part of the Western Sahara presently occupied by Mauritania. The worst is their own extinction.

The danger is that, even before this episode, these were signs that Algeria is contemplating a 'sell-out' which would surely mean abandoning the Saharas to their fate. The scenario goes as follows: a charade of a referendum would be held in the disputed territory. The refugees in Algeria would return to their homeland to take part in it, but their numbers would be swamped by hordes of Moroccan and Mauritanian

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'Saharans' sent in so as to pack the polls.

The fate of the Saharans, under those conditions, is all too easy to imagine. They would probably be seen as a captured enemy who had, in the past, defeated the Mauritanians and humiliated the Moroccans. If they were not exterminated – the most likely outcome – they might hope to be put to work as slaves in the phosphate mines at Bu Craa in the centre or in the salt mines further south. At best, they would be seen as a nuisance. No country likes hordes of refugees, who pose immense problems of settlement, and no country likes nomads, who are allergic to bureaucratic control. So, however they are seen, their fate would probably be the same. Along the southern fringe of the Sahara, nomadic tribes have been systematically exterminated by countries such as Mali.

Light of Experience

The Saharans would become the last in a long list of marginal societies which have fallen victim to their neighbours' urge to extend their boundaries – to control, to plan and to exploit. These pressures were inherited and copied from us – indeed, even now, they are but pale reflections of the pressures which western capitalism and socialist capitalism are together forcing upon the whole world. The Eskimos have gone, the Kurds are going, it is happening in Indonesia, Africa and Latin America. It looks as though it is shortly going to happen to the Saharans.

In countries like Morocco and Algeria precise information is hard to come by. So it becomes a bit like Kremlinology. What does emerge has to be interpreted in the light of what doesn't. In Algiers, as Reuters can amply testify, any journalist who files stories unacceptable to the Algerian Government quickly finds himself packing his bags. So when Paul Balta, the highly respected Algerian correspondent of *Le Monde*, writes about secret negotiations concerning the Sahara, the story is news in itself, apart from the information it conveys.

Recently Paul Balta filed just such a story. Secret negotiations were being conducted by the Saudi Arabians, at the behest of the Americans. Some sort of referendum would be conducted on the lines already mentioned. Morocco and Mauritania would be allowed to keep what they already claim to hold. Algeria, in return for abandoning its consistent and unflagging support for the Polisario for more than two years, would get the following: a share, along with Morocco and Mauritania, of the Sahara phosphates; ratification by Morocco of a treaty recognising the Algerian-Moroccan border in the disputed area near the Algerian iron ore mines round Tindouf (where the Saharan refugees are encamped); and Saudi-Arabian finance for gas-mining at Berga and for the building of a gas pipeline across the Western Sahara to the Atlantic seabed to facilitate gas exports to America.

The story contained no official denial on the part of the Algerian Government. The Polisario, on the other hand, were quoted as rejecting it 'categorically' – and that, in itself, was the first public hint of any disagreement between the Algerians and the Polisario. Still, as Paul Balta wrote, it is difficult to see how the Algerians could possibly implement such an agreement. They have already staked an enormous amount of money and prestige, and mortgaged influence and credibility, on the Saharan question, both internally and internationally, particularly within the Organisation for African Unity. They have stood out against enormous pressures from the Arab League which, unlike the OAU, has supported Morocco on this question.

To understand how it might, nevertheless, be possible, it is necessary to go back a bit. The last time the Saudi Arabians tried to negotiate a settlement was nearly a year ago, last November. One of the main differences was that then there was mention of some degree of autonomy for the Saharans. The absence of any such mention this time suggests that the Saharans were themselves the main obstacle to an agreement with the result that this time they are quite callously being left out of account altogether.

Some confirmation of this comes from the fact that when, at the end of last year, Algeria's Foreign Secretary Bouteflika reported the failure of the negotiations to the UN Secretary General, Kurt Waldheim, he did so with evident regret. Polisario's main support within Algeria has been President Boumedienne, who by all accounts has frequently had to resist internal pressure to settle from Bouteflika and others. It now looks as though perhaps he has had to agree at last that the Saharans will have to be sacrificed. Why?

One reason could be that Algeria is increasingly in hock to the United States. America has now replaced France as Algeria's principal trading partner. It has signed agreements to export large quantities of gas to America. And it is also committed to long-term financial agreements with the World Bank. All this adds up to a formidable series of reasons why, if America should suddenly decide to lean on Algeria, President Boumedienne would certainly have to listen.

The American Involvement

Up to now, the United States's involvement in the conflict has been discreet. Overt interference has been left to France, and the French have responded from the beginning by diplomatic and military support for Morocco and Mauritania. However, that was before the Russians moved in. In a July issue of *New Times*, it was made clear that the Russians now officially support the Polisario and 'their inalienable right to self-determination'. Given the enormous amount of influence the Russians are piling up for themselves on the eastern horn of Africa, the Americans may well have decided that the issue had to be settled before the Russians could move in there as well.

That could explain the American involvement and the timing of it. The OAU had agreed to hold a special summit conference in Lusaka at the beginning of October to settle the issue. At the last minute the conference was postponed, ostensibly because Zambia claimed that the Rhodesian fighting meant that President Kaunda could not guarantee the security of the delegates. The real reason, though, was almost certainly to give the Saudi Arabian mediator a chance to get a settlement. Any settlement that amounts, as the proposed one does, to commit genocide, must surely be totally unthinkable.

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The NEW STATESMAN is widely read in universities and colleges, not only in Britain but also in America and the Commonwealth countries.

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For details see back page

Roger Woddis

Mouthful

Prince Philip recently made a broadcast from Balmoral on the Future of Britain.

Put not your trust in princes,
Nor bow before their pride,
Unless the words they utter
Are heard on Radio Clyde.

The Oracle has spoken;
We hear the voice of doom,
Predicting future horrors
And inspissated gloom.

He sees directed labour,
A commonwealth of slaves,
In which, with prices rising
Not even Jesus saves.

And by the year 2,000
You'll have to pawn your crown,
Your health beyond all treatment,
Your wealth not handed down.

Your take-home pay will dwindle,
Fringe benefits will grow,
With state-supported spongers –
And heavens, he should know.

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Words' worth.

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Ian Mather

Post-War Impressions of Vietnam

'Compared with what lies beneath our coastal waters all the oil in the capitalist world is no bigger than the stamp on one of our pot elephants,' said the Vietnamese guide. The 20 East German tourists in his charge laughed, being well-versed in this particular folklorism of recent Vietnamese history. 'What we are doing' added the guide, warming to his theme, 'is letting the capitalists develop our oil with their technology so that we can sell it to them at a high price.'

The allusion to pot elephants referred to one of Vietnam's quirkish attractions for American servicemen. They bought hundreds of thousands of the mass-produced elephants, each weighing up to 100 lbs, and dispatched them home as souvenirs simply by sticking the necessary stamps on the elephants' buttocks. The Americans called them 'buffies', which was supposed to stand for 'Bloody Stupid Fucking Elephants'. For many an American family today the legacy of the Vietnam war is a 'buffy' in the garden or a dead son. Sometimes both.

The guide's grandiloquent talk is common among the North Vietnamese today, especially among the new elite who are taking over the South. It is an understandable extension of their exultation in defeating the world's most powerful war machine. You see the same total conviction in the beautiful smiles on the faces of the Northerners who are now running Government departments, 're-education centres', 'new economic zones' and tourist offices in the South.

Spoils of Peace

Yet it is all bravado. Two and a half years after the war ended Vietnam remains a poverty-stricken, struggling country with its agriculture ruined, its industry dislocated, and its people able to enjoy only those non-material spoils of war: peace and unification. There may be oil in the South China Sea off Vietnam, and French and Italian oil companies are showing interest in exploration. But Vietnam is in no position to drive a bargain.

The surrealism of the statement made above was underlined by the fact that it took place while we were all waiting at Hanoi airport for our flight to the South – a DC4 from the French colonial era (cheap on fuel) – to arrive. It didn't. 'Storms' said the guide without further explanation as we returned to our hotel after waiting all day. 'That's a pity.' Across the runway stood a row of modern jets, all under wraps as the Vietnamese did not have enough fuel to use them. Back in the hotel a man was trying in vain for the second time in two days to make a telephone call to Ho Chi Minh City. On the reception desk lay letters from the outside world. They had taken 28 days to reach Hanoi from Europe.

Understandable though some feelings of superiority may be in the light of the country's military achievement, they mask the fact that the ravages of war go deeper than the unsightly mess of mile after mile of derelict American military bases surrounded by rusting barbed wire, and gigantic scrapyards of American and South Vietnamese military vehicles which litter the countryside.

In two weeks of travelling around the old North and South Vietnam I saw virtually no street-lighting in the North, though the South remains much better-off. In North Vietnam families sat at wooden tables outside their simple huts eating by candlelight. The only street lighting in Hanoi was 100 yards or so opposite the new tourist hotel on the edge of the city, built by the Cubans. Approaching Hanoi by road in the dark the only illumination ahead was the Ho Chi Minh mausoleum, shining like a giant glow-worm.

It is not uncommmon to see women straining against heavy loads on barrows. In Haiphong harbour, flattened repeatedly by the Americans, I saw Vietnamese women unloading sacks of rice from a Russian ship by hand. Other women then dragged the sacks on carts through the red mud, and a third group then loaded them onto a train bound for Ho Chi Minh City. Priority had been given to food ships, but the port would have been at a standstill had it not been for nine huge yellow and green cranes which I was told had been a free gift from Russia at the end of the war. Cargo lay in vast piles in the open air as hardly any warehouses had been left standing.

There was little food in the markets of North Vietnam. In Hanoi I saw dog meat on sale. Outside Hanoi's national bank I saw a woman arrive with a wooden box full of brownish ice cream attached to her bicycle. A furious queue formed around her and she sold out within minutes.

Nature has been doubly cruel to the Vietnamese. The rice harvest failed earlier this year as a result of unusually cold weather. Then a typhoon hit the North last month causing further damage to crops as well as to the towns and cities of the North. Haiphong was entirely without water on the day I visited it, and a large evil-smelling lake of brackish water hummed with mosquitoes. As as result of these two disasters the Vietnamese Government has cut the basic food ration (mostly rice) from 18 kilos a month per person to 14 kilos. There are frequent queues of people with ration books, and on one occasion at the Hanoi central market I saw people struggling desperately for packets of flour which were being sold off ration.

The basic problem is the dislocation of agriculture. Vast tracts of the countryside lie devastated by the war. The principal need is for irrigation to bring sweet water to the sour earth in these areas. But the Vietnamese do not possess the necessary digging equipment, bulldozers or tractors. Any verdict on the long-term effects of defoliation by the Americans must await a proper scientific study, if one is ever permitted. All I can say is that from the window seat of a low-flying DC4 I saw only two possible examples of the effects of defoliation, which I know how to recognise.

One spot was where the vegetation was brown along the banks of a river running through verdant jungle in the central Highlands. The Americans did defoliate river banks to enable their fighter-bomber pilots to see the movement of enemy sampans more easily. Secondly, I saw a rubber plantation of blackened and stunted trees near the former Bien Hoa base some 25 miles from Ho Chi Minh City.

On the other hand, I saw innumerable old American fire bases from the air. The Americans usually defoliated the jungle outside the perimeter to destroy any cover for their enemies. In every case greenery now covers these bases completely. Their circular perimeters, trenches and earthworks are now mere ripples in the jungle, and from the air they already have the appearance of archaeological sites. At Cu Chi, 30 miles north-west of Ho Chi Minh City where the Vietcong had a major field headquarters, there are now thick bamboo forests where during the shooting war not a plant grew as a result of repeated defoliation by the Americans.

Asking for Aid

The Vietnamese naturally do not share this admittedly impressionistic view of the effects of defoliants. So it is only fair to quote their side. In a book just published in Hanoi by the Foreign Languages Publishing House an anonymous Vietnamese writer describes a journey by car through South Vietnam earlier this year. Though his statistics may be suspect his eye-witness observations seem accurate.

After relating that the Americans dropped 71,230m. litres of chemical compounds on Vietnam he says that it 'seemed rather odd' that everything was so green in South Vietnam. However, you have to learn to look beneath this 'deceptive verdure', he writes. He visited many areas where the plant life has been drastically altered to the dismay of the villagers. In place of 'age-old coconut, mango and milk-apple trees' were 'new small green banana trees and sugar canes producing inadequate harvests'. At Cu Chi and other areas frequently defoliated he noted tough deep-rooted grass, now called 'American grass', where formerly there had been fertile fields and orchards. In a country virtually without tractors the most likely conclusion is that the real damage from defoliation has been to reduce formerly arable areas to rough ground which the Vietnamese do not have the implements to make fertile again.

To try to tackle the basic agricultural and industrial problems the Vietnamese Government has launched a major programme to solicit aid and attract foreign investment. The leadership has called for cuts in domestic consumption and an export drive. Vienamese officials have been tour-

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ing the developed world extolling the attractions of Vietnam. Under the country's new code for investment outside companies are allowed a 49-per-cent share in joint enterprises in Vietnam.

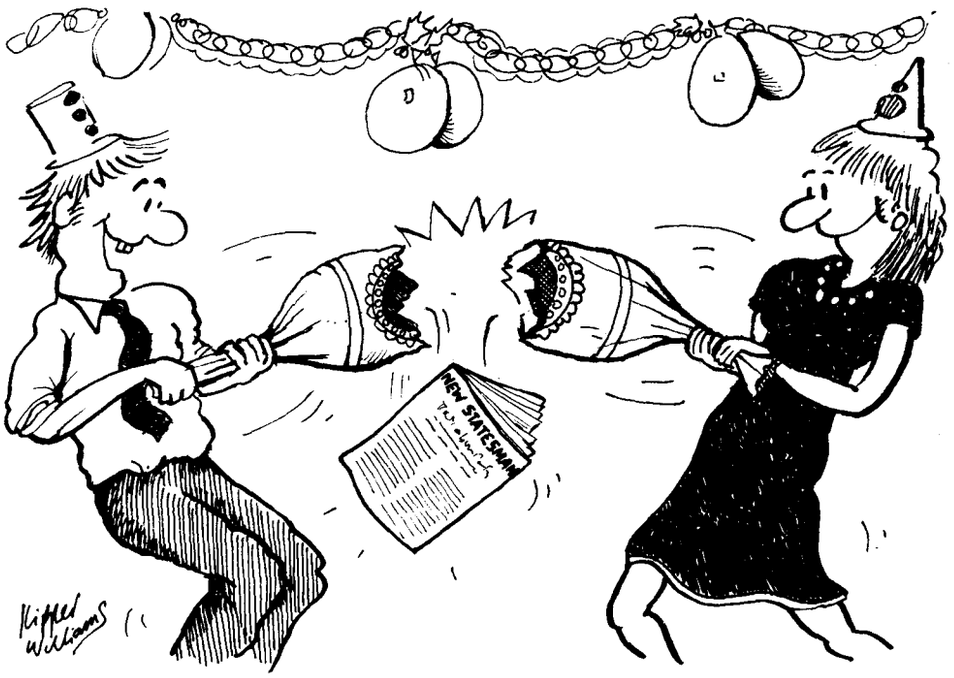
But western businessmen report frustration over bureaucratic hold-ups, vagueness of targets and secrecy. A West German diplomatic source told me that a piece of X-ray equipment worth $5m. and provided by Siemens in Germany had ended up at the port of Da Nang instead of at Haiphong. A representative of Siemens flew out at Siemens's expense to try to sort out the ensuing bureaucratic tangle. But for weeks he could not get permission to go from Hanoi to Da Nang, as all foreigners must do. When he finally got to Da Nang docks he found the equipment damaged and pilfered. He returned to Germany, and brought back more parts. The Vietnamese then said they did not want the equipment.

A representative of the United Nations Commission for Refugees had similar tales of obstructions. Though the US is spending $7m. in aid to Vietnam this year, mostly on agricultural projects in devastated areas near the old de-militarised zone, the UN representatives in Hanoi have great difficulty in getting permission to visit the sites to see how the money is being spent.

The Vietnamese economy is in fact being baled out by Russia, which is continuing to give large amounts of aid ranging from foodstuffs to industrial equipment. China cut off aid immediately the war ended. Recently, there have been indications that Russia, which is also supporting the economies of Cuba and Angola, will not be willing to support Vietnam indefinitely. These factors are already having a significant impact on diplomatic relations between Vietnam and her neighbours. Stirrings of the traditional hostility towards the Chinese are clearly visible in new posters showing how the Vietnamese repelled the Mongol invasion in the 13th century.

The red carpet treatment given to Cambodia's hitherto unknown leader, Pol Pot, when he appeared unexpectedly in Peking last month, also underlined Vietnam's growing isolation. There are at least 60,000 refugees from Cambodia living in Vietnam, and it is significant that Vietnam, far from cooperating with the Cambodians and sending them back, is allowing them to stay and even giving them rice rations. Last month fighting between Vietnamese and Cambodian forces on the frontier was reported by the Vietnamese news agency.

This brings us to the curiously ambiguous attitude of the Vietnamese towards the Americans. Officially, the United States is being labelled as the imperialist aggressor which was entirely responsible for the war, and the Vietnamese are building 'museums of American war crimes' to drive home the message. One such is the former American Consulate-General and CIA station on the waterfront at Da Nang. It is an elegant house with a central courtyard in which are displayed American helicopters, tanks and armoured personnel carriers, surrounded by a sequence of rooms with displays of photographs and war material. The oddest fact about this museum is its total reliance on Western news agency and newspaper photographs, and the widespread use of American



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published statistical data about the war.

Most correspondents who covered the war for any length of time witnessed atrocities carried out by Americans or South Vietnamese. Yet only those of the photographs which were published in the West are in this exhibition. It seems strange that North Vietnamese reporters who also covered the war should not have stumbled upon a single atrocity fit to be included in the collection. It is almost as though the concept of a war atrocity is regarded by the Vietnamese as in some way *Western*. The Vietnamese themselves simply covered their wounded with rushes and abandoned them. They did not even return the bodies of dead soldiers to their families for burial. A Government official would simply visit the family and hand over a death certificate.

In addition the Da Nang museum houses a number of blatant untruths. Several of the photographs have been given a twisted interpretation. A photograph of an American soldier holding a dead child by one arm is presented as an American atrocity. It was in fact taken by an internationally-respected war photographer who was with the unit on patrol when they came across the villagers already murdered.

It is ironical that if the United States had not pursued its 'open house' policy towards journalists covering the Vietnam war, allowing them to travel freely (and free) into all battle areas and accommodating them in American camps the Vietnamese today would have no photographs for their war museums. But the museum does also contain an appalling 'chamber of horrors' with whips, vices, cactus thorns 'used to push into the flesh of women', and pieces of glass on which prisoners had been ordered to stand.

Most of the blame for the war is placed upon President Johnson. There are many photographs of him and quotations purporting to show that his credo was one of imperialist aggression. There is little emphasis on Nixon or Ford and no reference at all to Kennedy. Most significant of all, perhaps, because the museum is intended for internal consumption, is that the South Vietnamese Army, over a million strong under Thieu, is simply not mentioned. There is the occasional vague reference to 'enemy soldiers' or 'puppet troops' but basically crimes and atrocities are attributed to the Americans. The official view is that the war was not a civil war but a war of aggression in which some Southerners were unfortunately misled. The aim is to allow the South Vietnamese to exculpate themselves in the interest of national reconciliation, which is the policy of the North towards the South.

The case of the Vietcong is more complex. Once again they receive little mention: and in the South I saw fewer than half a dozen blue, red and yellow Vietcong flags. As soon as the fighting ended the Vietcong units were disbanded and the Vietcong sent home or incorporated into the regular North Vietnamese army. The dilemma for the North is this: if Hanoi gives full credit to the role of the Vietcong it enhances the prestige of the South, gives southerners a moral claim to parity with the North, and makes absorption of the south on northern lines more difficult. If Hanoi does *not* recognise the part played by the Vietcong then it must abandon its long-standing public position, namely that the battles in the South were fought by Southerners, not by North Vietnamese regular soldiers who officially had no right to be there under international agreements. So far the party line has not been clearly determined. The National War Museum in Hanoi, which charts the history of the 'liberation struggle' stops in 1972.

When I asked one of the directors why, he said they had not been able to collect items from the South. There is not even a mention of the great Têt offensive in 1968 when the Vietcong and North Vietnamese army seized 18 cities and got into the American embassy and the presidential palace in Saigon, even though this is regarded in the West as the major psychological blow which destroyed American morale in Vietnam.

Yet the fact that anti-Americanism is confined to museums is significant. It is as though the United States is a past not a present enemy. There is no anti-American propaganda whatsoever in the newspapers or over the loudspeaker systems in the main towns. There is certainly no trace of hostility to Westerners among ordinary people. On the contrary, one of the most ironic aspects of Vietnam today is the universal acceptability of the American dollar. All prices in the new showcases of souvenirs in Ho Chi Minh City's hotels are in dollars, as are the prices of domestic airline tickets. Great efforts are being made to attract tourists with their valuable foreign currency, and I was told that American tourists would be welcome.

Yet the Government needs a visible enemy to stir the people to greater effort to win the peace. Diplomats in Hanoi see the glimmerings of a new alignment in which diplomatic relations between Hanoi and Washington will be opened, perhaps next year, while China and Cambodia become the new 'aggressors.'

In preparation for the hoped-for tourist wave from the West the Vietnamese Government is even resurrecting the 'buffy' industry.

Tim Albert

Out of School

Not even William's mother will deny that he can be difficult and disruptive. In his 15 years he has been found guilty of receiving stolen goods, thrown out of examinations for what are nicely called 'irregularities', been rude to his teachers and hit other children. But his past misdeeds (and the thickness of his personal file) are insufficient justification for the way that he has been treated by the education system. Although he wants to stay on and take exams, and social workers have recommended that he be allowed to do so, he has been expelled from his school after an appeals procedure that contained few elements of natural justice, and after a suspension of 104 days.

William is the second child of a large family. He is black. His parents do not get on with each other and it is not a happy home. ('A long history of parental discord with concomitant financial difficulties' says the social workers' report). After hitting a boy on 30 May (William says in his defence that he, a fourth-former, hit the boy, a third-former, because he in turn had just hit and bullied a first-former), he was sent home. On 1 June the head wrote to his mother confirming that William had been suspended.

Nothing happened for three weeks. Then a case conference was held at the school, attended by the assistant education officer, the head, the form teacher and a social worker. William's mother was not allowed in, but she was invited to come after the conference to get a verbal report on the outcome. The conference agreed, she was told, that William shouldn't be in a large school, and that he should go somewhere else where he would be in a smaller unit and could get 'work experience'. The mother was told that she could appeal, and she said she would.

The administrative wheels of education offices, however, grind exceeding slow, and it was not for another two and a half weeks – 43 days after the alleged offence – that the appeal was heard. It was conducted by the chairwoman of the school governors and the assistant chairman, both middle-aged and white and for all their undoubted good intentions far more likely to identify with the headmaster and with education officials than with a young rough black, and his bewildered mum.

During the appeal the head produced a thick file on William's past misdeeds, which the mother and her accompanying 'friend' were not allowed to see, and which contained many allegations that she had not heard before. The governors also had reports from a social worker and a psychologist, which were not shown to the mother either (although she found out later that at least one of them recommended that the child be allowed to stay on at school). The appeal was adjourned until the beginning of the Autumn term to consider William's latest school reports: not surprisingly (since he had been suspended for disruption for most of the term) they concluded that he was able enough, but disruptive. The appeal was dismissed and William's career in a normal school at an end.

It wasn't difficult to unearth details of this rather sad case history. Cases abound where children – far too many of them West Indian – are excluded from 'compulsory' full-time education for weeks on end. A lawyer, talking of the length of time it takes for local authorities to fix up suspended children with home tuition or

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arrange to send them to special units, told me of a case where a boy had been out of school for the best part of three years. A community worker told of a boy who had truanted for a year, was persuaded to go back, and then suspended on the first day of term for wearing the wrong kind of blazer. An MP told of a girl suspended from 3 June to 14 October following a scuffle with a teacher. The effect of these debarments is obvious as rejection leads to frustration and as a private matter of school discipline becomes escalated into a matter of crime and public order.

It is too easy to put the blame on individual teachers and their insensitivity, incompetence and/or prejudice. The real task is to build a system that will not only safeguard against possible abuses, but will also be seen to be a safeguard. One of the main current difficulties is just what constitutes suspension. According to the articles of government of many schools, the head can 'suspend' for any cause which he considers adequate, and then notify the chairman of governors. That in itself is pretty vague and many local authorities have elaborated their own, firmer procedures. But there is a celebrated loophole. By a court case of 1953 concerning a girl with a kidney complaint who wanted to wear trousers to school (Speirs *vs* Warrington Corporation) heads can keep children out of their schools for indefinite conditional periods (e.g. come back when your hair is cut/your trousers pressed/your skirt lengthened/you have brought your father/without being subject to the rather flabby safeguards afforded to cases of suspension. This is commonly called exclusion.

It all opens the door to abuse. Nobody could argue with the head who claimed that she had only suspended five children in her school career (two for assault, two for stealing children, and one for murder) but other cases seem more doubtful. One girl was dismissed from her convent for reading a book the nuns thought dirty. A five-year-old was rude to the dinner lady and whose mother was then rude to the head. An exam candidate was sent home on the day of his exam because he was wearing the wrong coloured shirt. There were prefects who played an April Fool's jest on the school assembly.

But the most potent criticisms concern the time taken to hear the appeals, and what those who witness these procedures see as their lack of justice. At the moment they are administrative meetings and not tribunals with any legal status. Thus evidence doesn't have to be produced and therefore doesn't have to be challenged. There is no cross-examination, no right of legal representation.

Nobody would deny that heads sometimes need to get children out of schools quickly (what else do you do, one asked me recently, with the child who goes around carving his initials with a razor-blade on other children?). But it is counter-productive unless the way he or she does it is seen to be fair. The recently published Taylor Report on school governors considered the question of suspensions and expulsions, and put forward some eminently sensible suggestions. They outlined a model procedure to be followed, and suggested legislation to end the loophole over exclusion and to transfer the power to expel from governors to local authorities (whose eagerness to expel, presumably, would be tempered by their statutory duty to keep the child somewhere in full time education).

But the path to an educational Nirvana is littered with the unimplemented proposals of committees of enquiry, and whether Taylor's recommendations will be implemented remains to be seen. The teachers are expected to oppose what they will consider an erosion of their own professional judgment (the fact that this judgment sometimes errs they seem to find hard to accept), and although the Secretary of State has written around for comments on this part of Taylor it is not beyond the bounds of probability that both the comments and the recommended reforms will go no further than the secretarial in-tray.

That would be quite disgraceful. A failure to act firmly now will not only prejudice much of the good work being done in education and race relations, but will ensure that the continuous drip of scandalous case-histories like William's will still divert attention from other, more fundamental issues. What kind of sanctions can we allow in our schools? How can we identify – and help – potentially disruptive children at a far earlier stage in their school careers? After all, each suspension represents a serious breakdown in our current educational apparatus, regardless of whether the procedures are just or not.

Alasdair Buchan

The NF and the Old, Old Story

Spot the difference. 'Jews are poisonous maggots feeding on a body in an advanced state of decay.' And, 'They [Jews] have a very powerful influence in certain aspects of national life which is out of proportion to their numbers and is not achieved solely by merit.'

The answer, of course, is that there is no difference other than in the use of less emotional language second time around. And it is second time around. The first quote was made by overt Nazi John Tyndall, then in his swastika armband and jackboot-wearing period in 1964; the second was made to me less than a year ago by the same Mr Tyndall, by then wearing the crisply cut tweed suit of an aspirant suburban squire. He had by then become chairman of the National Front and was in pursuit of some kind of political respectability.

The problem with pursuing that respectability is that you must be sure you are attacking the correct scapegoats. It is presumably obvious to the thickest National Front supporter that in 1977 the votes lie in nigger-bashing and not in Jew-baiting. (Well, perhaps not to the thickest.) And therein lies a problem for Mr Tyndall and his fellow members of the Front's National-Directorate. For no matter how hard he tries Mr Tyndall still doesn't like Jews.

He has learned the lessons of the outraged publicity he and Martin Webster received over their anti-semitic views in the early 1960s. Attempts are made to soften the harshness of the attitudes though not too successfully. When I asked Tyndall if he had once called the Jews parasites he quickly retorted with the accurate 'maggots' quote he paused, then added that he still held basically to that view but only in relation to those Jews with an 'excessive influence'. He continued: 'If you had a group of British people in Israel who had excessive influence in banking, the arts, theatre and the law, Israel, naturally, would curb their power.' Still in this moderate vein he added: 'I wouldn't mind if they didn't have so much influence. Nearly all the Jews I know in politics are somewhere towards the Left politically. Their influence is towards internationalism and they have a great deal of sympathy towards coloured immigrants, rather than for the indigenous white population of our country.'

The question which is immediately begged is what would the Front do about all this undue influence? 'We would simply attempt to reduce that influence in these sectors.' How? 'By what means we would have to consider when the time came.' Repatriation? 'I think the wish of a great many Jews is to settle in Israel and we would not discourage them. The ones who want to integrate here, *and not cause trouble*, have nothing to fear from us and we have nothing to fear from them.'

Tyndall, in fairness, was not placing great emphasis on these opinions. He gave them because he was asked for them. They do not play a prominent part in his public utterances though they do occasionally surface in a loose disguise. In a speech last year in Bradford he dealt with the white opponents of the Front. The *Telegraph and Argus* reported that Tyndall had a method of spotting today's 'bugs and lice' which he had cadged from the Tsarist police. These enemies, he said, were dirty, hairy and had features racially alien to those of the people in the country they lived in. They also went under false names – Trotsky was really called Bronstein, Zinoviev's real name was Apfelbaum and Tony Cliff of the Socialist Workers Party was really called Gluckstein. Get the message?

Is this anti-semitism the remaining hatred of one former Nazi or is it an accepted part of National Front politics? Dr Jacob Gewirtz of the Board of Deputies of British Jews feels it is a wider threat than the meanderings of one man. His organisation's determined pursuit of the Front has made it second in Front demonology only to the Socialist Workers Party. His files show examples of anti-semitic speeches or letter-writing campaigns to local newspapers by rank and file Front supporters.

A focus of Jewish opposition to the Front

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has been a publication called 'Did Six Million Really Die? – The Truth at Last.' It is a 28-page booklet claiming to disprove the genocidal activities of the Nazis. Its several assertions include a reduction of the number of concentration camp deaths to 300,000, the statement that *Diary of Anne Frank* was a fraud written after the war and the Nuremberg confessions were obtained by torturing German prisoners. (The source of proof for the last was Senator Joe McCarthy). Most odious of all, apart from the photographs showing 'healthy and cheerful inmates released from Dachau', is the allegation that the whole holocaust was invented by Jews to obtain exaggerated financial reparation from the Germans.

It is an open secret in the National Front that it was written by one of the party's leading members. The name on the publication is 'Richard Harwood' and he is described grandly as 'a writer and specialist in political and diplomatic aspects of the Second World War. At present he is with the University of London'. In fact, 'Harwood' is Richard Verrall, a former student at London University, a member of the National Front Directorate and full-time editor of Spearhead, the Front magazine which Tyndall personally owns. The Front's defensiveness on charges of anti-semitism is best shown by the fact that to this day Verrall denies he wrote the work and both Tyndall and the booklet's publisher arch-racist Robin Beauclair will still not confirm the fact.

Beauclair's answer to my recent inquiry was 'I say assholes to all your Jewish bosses'. Tyndall confirmed that he knew the real identity of the author but refused to reveal it. Beauclair, who is too extreme for the Front, claims that the booklet has sold nearly a million copies in 40 different countries since it was first published in 1974. It was referred to the Attorney-General by Dr Gewirtz some time ago but as the law then stood there was a requirement that the court must be satisfied that it was written and published with *the intent* of causing racial disharmony.

Now the law has been altered and the booklet has again been sent to Sam Silkin. The law now states that someone has broken the law 'if he publishes or distributes written matter which is threatening, abusive or insulting . . . in a case where, having regard to all the circumstances hatred is likely to be stirred up against any racial group in Great Britain by the matter and words in question.' It is ironic that while the publication is still legally sold in Britain it is banned in South Africa under the Publications Act on the grounds that it is 'harmful to the relations between any sections of the inhabitants of the Republic'. It is something of an irony that while the anti-semitic views of Tyndall, Verrall and Co. go unchallenged in Britain the same views were banned in South Africa, according to Mr Arthur Suzman QC, of the South African Board of Jewish Deputies, thanks to backing from that country's Justice Minister. He was – of all people – the famous Jimmy Kruger.

It is a common defence by Tyndall and Martin Webster, when confronted with their own particular Jewish problem, to claim that the Front has Jewish members. Until now they have been even more difficult to find than Anglican clerics. Perhaps one might like to come forward now and explain his political alliance with John Tyndall. Or alternatively a Jewish Front supporter might like to explain his attitude to the new Front Youth movement. Tyndall's attitude to youth movements is much clearer. When I asked him what he liked about Hitler his first choice was the Hitler Youth. 'He took them off the streets where they were standing on street corners and abusing their bodies and he built them into a patriotic, healthy and cohesive force,' said Tyndall.

Then again, perhaps there aren't all that many Jewish members of the National Front.

Alison Macleod

Crying for Hungary

At 5 a.m. on Sunday, 4 November 1956, Imre Nagy, who had for ten days been Prime Minister of Hungary, broadcast his appeal to the world. 'At dawn today Soviet forces made an unprovoked attack on the capital, with the obvious intention of overthrowing the lawful, democratic Hungarian Government.'

Radio Budapest fell silent at 7 a.m., just as the talking was beginning elsewhere. The Executive Committee of the British Communist Party was meeting that weekend. So was the body which controlled the Executive Committee, though the party rules never mentioned its existence, the Political Committee. Its proceedings were secret. The first public account of them comes, 21 years later, from the *New Worker*. This is the organ of the New Communist Party, the breakaway group which rejects Eurocommunism and embraces the Russians, tanks and all. Their erstwhile comrades call them 'the tankies'.

In a gently snarling obituary of John Gollan, the late General Secretary of the British Communist Party, this paper asserts: 'Few in his party knew that John was opposed to supporting the Soviets' Hungarian action in that dark moment. He led a majority in the Political Committee against Pollitt, Dutt and Mahon. Fortunately it was defeated in the Executive Committee for, if carried, the Party would have been dissociated from the Soviet action.'

It would indeed, and those of us who thought it should have been had no notion that Gollan was on our side. Where does the story come from?

Harry Pollitt, Palme Dutt and John Mahon are now all dead. It seems that before they died both Dutt and Mahon told the 'tankies' (who were then still inside the Communist Party) that John Gollan had opposed them over Hungary. But the story cannot be quite right. There cannot have been a *majority* against the Soviet action in the political committee. If there had been, the political committee *as a whole* would have had to recommend to the executive committee that it should condemn the Soviet action. Then every member of the political committee would have had to vote for the agreed resolution, whether he personally supported it or not. Those were the rules, unwritten but always rigidly applied. In fact the resolution put forward by the political committee, and voted for by every member of that committee when it came before the full executive, was a resolution *supporting* the Soviet action. This is pointed out in a very carefully worded statement which appeared in the *Morning Star* on September 21, 1977. It comes from a surviving member of the Political Committee, Bert Ramelson: and 'A despicable travesty of the facts' is how Bert Ramelson describes the 'tankie' version. Yet he never denies the central point – that Gollan wanted to condemn the Soviet attack. He says only that Gollan defended it in public.

He certainly did. On the following day, 5 November, he came to address the editorial staff of the *Daily Worker*. I thought every word that came from John Gollan ought to be weighed. So I took notes, and typed them out, with dots where the argument was too familiar, while they were still fresh in my mind:

> We have got to look at the background. Hungary was the original Fascist country in Europe . . . A quotation from *The Times* of 4 August 1950: 'The Catholic Church enjoyed a unique position which would have been challenged by any 20th-century government . . . Throughout the centuries the cardinal has held political power.' Industrialisation in a peasant country is always a difficult process. I think everyone here is mature enough to realise that all this would have caused enough difficulties if there had been no abuses . . . There were great unsolved problems . . . A reaction which has been financed and prepared for years . . . The crux of the problem was the Party. The rectification of mistakes was too slow . . . I would remind you of *The Times*: 'The 300,000 Hungarians who came to Rajk's reburial came . . . to demonstrate their opposition to the regime as a whole.' . . . Unless we see that there were these two basic trends – the just demands of the people, and counter-revolution and reaction . . . This was recognised even by Anna Kethly (last Tuesday's *Daily Herald*). The first thing they did in Budapest was to assassinate every Communist they could lay hands on . . . Whatever the excesses and abuses, Hungary was a workers' state. Therefore when the Soviet troops were called in we say this was absolutely correct . . . They were prepared to leave the solution to Nagy. But stage by stage Nagy capitulated to counter-revolution . . . What's the interesting thing about the demand for neutrality under four-power control? Not one country in the West answered that call, because it wasn't what they wanted . . . See *The Times* this morning . . . The Nagy Government represented no authority

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. . . Alexander Werth pointed out how the 'revolutionaries' had sized the Foreign Ministry, so that they could appeal to the UN . . . Mindszenty was trying to utilise the religious elements. He made four demands: (1) Away with Nagy; (2) Restoration of capitalism; (3) Restoration of the political power of the Church; (4) Western intervention.

Here I break off these notes, to point out that the full text of Cardinal Mindszenty's broadcast, then already available in London, contained none of these demands. Not that it would have mattered; the Cardinal broadcast late on the evening of 3 November, when the Soviet tanks must already have had their orders. Gollan's statement as a plain, deliberate lie. I thought at the time that he was lying because he wanted Soviet tanks to come down the Farringdon Road and force everybody to read the *Daily Worker*. If he was lying, although he did not want the Soviet tanks, simply because he had been outvoted by those who did, that throws a lurid light on the rest of his speech.

> I am glad that the Hungarian Communists rallied . . . The question of a bastion of Fascism in Hungary is not only an internal class issue. It was a menace to Jugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union . . . That is why the Soviet troops have responded to Kadar's appeal . . . It was decisive from two angles . . . In choosing tactics which would have tactity supported Hungarian fascism . . . It was our industrial comrades on the British Party EC who solidly and to a man said that this EC must stand with the Hungarian comrades . . . It could be argued: 'Better run the risk of fascism than the risk of war.' The risk of fascism was not a risk but a certainty . . . The West has not been able to get anything like a unanimous vote in the United Nations . . . Self-determination? . . . Under Mindszenty there would have been a fascist puppet state under the control of the US . . . Counter-revolution would not mean an independent Hungary ready to determine its future . . . Some comrades are saying: 'Can we have Socialism imposed by force?' This wasn't the case. Socialism was already established and was being torn apart . . . I know our stand will cause great difficulties for us.

Nobody but John Gollan could have made us listen to so much without interruption. One comrade asked whether the EC decision had been unanimous. John Gollan said: 'No. There were two against.' We learned later the two were Max Morris and Arnold Kettle.

Malcolm McEwen, the features editor, and James Friell (Gabriel, the cartoonist) then announced their resignation from the *Daily Worker*. A librarian told John Gollan that 'Jesuitry is Jesuitry'. A shorthand-typist rebuked these dissident comrades in the name of the class struggle. To which one veteran comrade, a miner's son, retorted: 'I joined the Party 33 years ago, out of the class struggle. We lived it. But if Hungary is what I joined the Party for . . .'

One man spoke up for the Soviet union. He was not regarded by the rest of us as a journalist. He had once said that he did not know the edition times of the paper, and saw no reason why he should. There is some evidence that he was employed there at Russian insistence.

A reporter asked Gollan what he meant by saying that the forces of reaction turned up at the reburial of Rajk. 'Three hundred thousand people! But that was the entire working-class population of Budapest. More than come out for May Day.' Gollan did not attempt to reply to the discussion: he adjourned the meeting for two days, and when we resumed, in a fiercer mood than before, he listened to us in silence. After that he left us alone. Our editor, Johnnie Campbell, who had been in Moscow during the vital days, came back and attempted to defend the Russian line. In the course of the next five months we became aware that he did not believe a word of it.

But Gollan remains a far more mysterious figure. A disillusioned British comrade, who had been working for Radio Budapest for nearly four years, came home through the flames of the rising. She told Gollan about the people she had met, broken by years in Stalin's prisons, about the refusal of the old Stalinists to admit to their crimes, about their privileged flats, their privileged hotels, their beaches on Lake Balaton surrounded by barbed wire . . . Gollan heard her out, saying gently from time to time, in his beautiful Edinburgh voice: 'Och! I wish we'd known all this.' He then continued to speak and write as if he did not know it.

We, the dissidents, were defeated. Yet, in a way, we won. In 1968, long after we had left the Communist Party, it said all the things about Soviet tanks in Czechoslovakia which we had said about Soviet tanks in Hungary. Hence the breakaway of the 'tankies'. From the split may come flying, here and there, some splinters of historical truth.

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London Diary

☐ Back home in the West Riding I heard Sir Harold Wilson make a major contribution to the debate about who exactly is the Greatest Living Yorkshireman. According to Sir Harold it is no longer F. S. Trueman but Geoffrey Boycott. Speaking at a cricket dinner in Leeds where Boycott received yet another award for his play last season, Sir Harold described Boycott in terms of all that was admirable and laudable in Yorkshiremen in particular and mankind in general. While modestly pleased with this assessment, Mr Boycott did cause us to wonder just when Sir Harold came to this important decision by reminding him that during his time as Prime Minister just about every top British sportsman was invited to Number Ten except Geoffrey Boycott. 'I'd like to have a look around,' said Boycott with becoming and appealing candour. Present incumbent please note.

☐ There is little doubt, however, that if he so desired, Mr Boycott could take Number Ten by storm and live there as Britain's first President. In an amazing reversal of public opinion he has been transformed during a matter of months from the brooding, sullen outsider to the clean-cut glamour boy of British sport. After I interviewed him on television at the end of the season he received the kind of fan mail normally reserved for pop stars. One woman wrote offering her daughter as a suitable candidate for marriage and added, by way of a postscript, that if Boycott didn't fancy the daughter then she, the mother, was also available. The funniest letter came from another woman who wrote to me expressing in glowing terms her admiration for Boycott's 'honesty, integrity and regard for traditional virtues instead of trendy and fashionable attitudes'. This sort of praise went on for page after page until the lady concluded: 'I was so impressed with Mr Boycott's conduct on your show that I intend writing to the Director-General asking if we can see more of Geoffrey Boycott on our television screens in future. And less of you.'

☐ The only people not in total rejoicing about Boycott's success are those members of the Yorkshire Cricket Committee, who, for one reason or another, would prefer it if Yorkshire had a different captain. For some time now Boycott has had problems with two or three members of the committee and it wasn't too long ago that he retained his captaincy of the county by only one vote. Much of the mutual discontent between Boycott and the cricket committee had been kept under wraps until a few weeks ago when, at the height of Boycott's triumph and with extraordinary lack of timing, one of the committee, a former Yorkshire wicket-keeper called Don Brennan, went on local radio and said he thought it would be better for the county if it had a new captain for the next season. In consequence the committee now has at its throat an action group of Yorkshire members determined to press for fundamental changes in the way that the club is run. They point out, with some justification, that over the years the Yorkshire executive has, generally speaking, made an ass of itself when dealing with players. They cite the way Wardle, Illingworth and Close were either dismissed from, or allowed to leave, the club prematurely. They don't want the same thing to happen to Boycott because they realise that if Brennan did get his way then Boycott would have no option but to resign and join another county. The betting in the county is that there will shortly be a vacancy on the cricket committee and Boycott will lead Yorkshire for a few seasons yet.

☐ The plain fact is, of course, that he ought to be captaining England. Had the selectors picked him instead of Greig then English cricket might not be in the pickle it now is. I'm not suggesting that the Packer episode would not have happened but I do believe that had Boycott been captain, and some of the players listened to his counsel on the matter instead of Greig's, then they might have formed a different opinion about the deal being offered them. The reason for Geoffrey Boycott's self-imposed exile from Test cricket was, I believe, because he felt outrageously cold-shouldered by being asked to serve under two captains – Denness and Greig – who were not in his class as a thinker about the game, did not match his seniority as an international player and most certainly could not equal his exploits in the middle. What is more, in the case of Greig, he felt it wrong that the captaincy of the England team should be given to a foreign player. How right he was. Will Mr Boycott captain England in the future? I hope so, and so does he. He has matured into an impressive man as well as a superb player. He has a lot to offer cricket in the coming years and one only hopes those people at Lords have the sense to exploit his potential to the full.

☐ I had better be careful about promoting the claims of fellow Yorkshiremen. It puts some people into a terrible tizzy. I didn't realise how much until I came across a passage in Jim Swanton's new book *Follow On* where he describes my reaction to the appointment of the aforesaid Denness as England captain as being an 'odious, sneering comment from a predictable quarter'. Mr Swanton then described me as 'that caricature of a Yorkshireman who is guaranteed to glorify anything and anyone who comes from his own small corner of the world and to denigrate almost all else'. What he fails to mention, of course, was that I was proven right in the end. Denness was not good enough to skipper England and was replaced by Greig. Another mistake, says I. Not so, says Big Jim, affectionately known to his friends as Engelbert Wobblychops. In fact, Mr Swanton played a considerable part in furthering Mr Greig's career in this country and when it came to the captaincy old E.W. – like a lot of others turned a blind eye to the fact that the man in charge of England was a South African. Had Greig come from north of Watford he wouldn't have warranted a nod from Engelbert.

☐ The High Court case notwithstanding, I am delighted that Tony Greig found Kerry Packer, or vice versa. They obviously were made for each other and should be very happy together. I can hardly wait for 24 November, when the two of them present to the waiting world an entirely new concept of cricket. Innovations we are promised include a yellow-coloured ball for night games, darker coloured sightscreens and electric drinks trolleys. Also, in the interest of brighter cricket, a circle will be drawn 30 yards from the pitch and for some time during the innings the captain of the fielding side will be expected to keep his men inside the circle to restrict defensive field placings. But by far the most intriguing aspect of the Packer game is the way that microphones will be concealed on the field of play to bring to the eager audiences those treasured moments, so much a feature of modern cricket, when the batsman calls the bowler a * * * * and the bowler tells the batsman to * * * * * * *. If it was possible I would give anything to hear E. W. Swanton do the first cricket commentary on a game featuring the salty verbal exchanges of modern cricket. Alas, it will never happen. Jim's against the Packer deal. So am I. For the first time in my life I find myself in the same bed as E.W. Am I cracking up?

☐ It's a good job they didn't have microphones on the field of play when Fred Trueman was in his pomp. There would have had to have been some crafty bleeping. One of the funniest on the field exchanges involved Fred. He was a young man and tearing his way through the Indians – who were and are not great lovers of fast bowling – with the splendid umpire Frank Chester standing at Fred's end. Eventually one of the older, more experienced Indian cricketers – Polly Umrigar, I think – decided to stop the Trueman rampage by indulging in a bit of gamesmanship. This involved stopping Trueman in his delivery stride and having the sightscreen moved. This happened a few times and, with the bowler becoming increasingly enraged, Frank Chester decided it was time to intervene. 'Tell me Mr Umrigar, where ideally would you like the sightscreen?' he queried. 'Ideally, Mr Chester, I'd like it between me and that mad devil Trueman' replied Umrigar.

Michael Parkinson

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ A village green, entirely surrounded by new buildings up to eleven stories high, may become the focal point of the new Hammersmith Centre. – *Hammersmith Post* (R. Kinnear)

☐ Last year the group was involved in a High Court battle with the top song-writing duo Bill Martin and Phil Coulter, who discovered them rehearsing under the name of Chuff in the cold-storage department of an Enfield banana factory. – *Evening Standard* (W. P. Ross)

☐ He had always been a man to bear misfortune with stoical endurance. A racehorse owner for the past 20 years, he had his first winner – Goblin – only three weeks ago. – *Sunday Telegraph* (T. Shahar)

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University Forum

Paula Neuss*

The Medievalist Case

'Sumer is icumen in'. Well it's not, but it is coming sooner than most people realise, for at the time that lyric was composed, 'sumer' meant spring. This does not dawn on the public even when they get to the bit about 'loudly sing cuckoo'. Perhaps this is partly owing to the confusion that everyone is, or should be, singing different lines at the same time, but nowadays people don't seem to know much more about cuckoos than they do about medieval literature. I don't really mind whether anyone knows about cuckoos, but I do think there ought to be more known about medieval literature. It is very good stuff, after all.

The trouble with most of us medievalists is that we're afraid of talking about what interests us for fear of boring other people. We must learn to be less unassuming. *Troilus and Criseyde* is a lot more absorbing than most newspapers, and while it may be admittedly more difficult to read in the first instance, at least it bears re-reading, and reading again and again. Here, though, we come up against the problem of *relevance*, one that strikes at the heart of many a university course. Nevertheless, Chaucer's picture of an inconstant woman is as accurate a one as that of any contemporary novelist (and a great deal better than Shakespeare's). As for the Wife of Bath, she really is in the news, or at least in the advertisements. Frequently on Capital Radio, in the dead hours of the night, I hear an ad. for some kind of eye-renovator, which runs roughly as follows: 'My fifth husband looked into my eyes and he said "Fluff" (that's what he used to call me) – "Fluff, you've lost your sparkle".' Having regained her 'sparkle' with the aid of the eye-drops, Fluff hints a proposal to the (presumably) oculist. This is exactly what the Wife of Bath is doing (admittedly at somewhat greater length), describing having had five husbands, emphasising her youth, and welcoming the sixth 'whenever he shal'. Not long ago, too, there was an interview in the *Guardian* with Vivian Nicholson, upon the publishing of her autobiography, headed 'Five Husbands and £150,000 later'.

Then there is the matter of the recent *Gay News* trial for blasphemy. James Kirkup's poem was certainly not saying anything new, but clearly Mrs Whitehouse, among many others, did not know that there are some very tender medieval lyrics celebrating the relationship between Christ and St John (with 'privitees' mentioned in no uncertain terms), or that Herod is consistently portrayed as gay in the miracle plays, particularly the Coventry Christmas pageants.

Medieval drama does not get much of a look-in in the compulsory medieval undergraduate course at London University, where there is still probably more medieval literature 'taught' than at most places. (I mean at undergraduate level: there are some very good postgraduate programmes in Medieval Studies at various universities, York and Reading for instance). I have experience of teaching at only one other English university (Kent), and there the medieval component of the course consisted of two optional seminars, one on Chaucer and one on medieval poetry 'other than Chaucer'. Usually about ten students (mainly girls, and I don't see why) took these options, so most of the students left the University knowing *nothing* about any literature before Shakespeare. (Or, if they were lucky, they might get the odd lecture on 'pre-Shakespearean drama' to start of the Shakespeare course.) I am sure the situation is similar in most 'new' universities. At London it is compulsory to take at least one medieval paper. I am certainly not arguing that this ought to be so everywhere; if something is compulsory the students undoubtedly take a dislike to it, and it is interesting how many continue to opt for Anglo-Saxon now that it has ceased to be required.

I am sure that the way to get students (and through them, the world at large) to read more medieval literature is to make the teaching of it more interesting. This might sound very obvious, but it is difficult to do at London when we are tied to such a rigid syllabus. The paper most students take is called *Chaucer and his Contemporaries*. This consists of a compulsory translation section; a section of questions on Chaucer, and a section on 'his contemporaries', where in effect students write on either Langland or the Gawain Poet, because these also occur in the required translation section, so we have to teach them, even if we would prefer to give the time say to lyrics. Medieval drama is not allowed to appear on this paper, for it is (or has been) argued by some that the *texts* are not contemporary with Chaucer. This is an unfortunate academic attitude. We do have to talk about miracle plays to make some points clear about Chaucer (many of the jokes in the *Miller's Tale* are missed if nothing is known of the plays about *Noah's Flood*), and a lot more sense can be made of *Patience* if we compare God's behaviour in it with that in many of these plays. And although *morality* plays are arguably later, we can get a much clearer view of something like the *Pardoner's Tale* by at least having a look at *Everyman*.

But my main objection to the London exam. paper is its inclusion of a section of compulsory translation, which it seems to me would be much better replaced by something like practical criticism, or a chance to write another essay. If a student cannot translate by his third year he is not suddenly going to discover an ability to do it, and most of them waste a vast amount of revision time plodding through the whole of *Piers Plowman*, most of which is still only available in the difficult-to-read, let alone translate, since it has no glossary, *EETS* edition, just in order to be able to do about 15 lines in the exam. It becomes perfectly clear from their essays on the poem whether they can actually read the thing, and the sad fact is that while most of them dutifully do their 15 lines quite competently, it seems that when required to discuss the poem they have no idea that it is one, let alone what it is about. If they were asked to write a piece of criticism of 15 lines it would be clear both whether they understood what it meant and whether they could respond to its poetry.

I don't know how far the London syllabus is typical of the 'older' universities, and would be interested to hear from colleagues. My general feeling is that we *must* get away from thinking of medieval literature as 'language' (some members of London University frequently refer to the 'language' component of the syllabus), and get ourselves into a position to show the students that it is poetry and drama as well as prose like Chaucer's *Retracciouns*.

Now preye I to hem alle that herkne this litel tretys or rede, that if ther be any thyng in it that liketh hem, that therof they thanken oure Lord Jhesu Crist, of whom procedeth al wit and al goodnesse./And if ther be any thyng that displese hem, I preye hem also that they arrette it to the defaute of myn unkonnynge, and nat to my wyl, that wold ful fayn have seyd bettre if I hadde had konnynge.

*Dr Paula Neuss teaches at Birkbeck College, University of London.

The other Foot...

In this week's Times Educational Supplement Michael Foot takes time off from politics to look back at his bibliophile upbringing and pays homage to Hazlitt, Swift, Montaigne and others who wrote books about books.

Also in this week's issue Conrad Russell reviews G. R. Elton's new book about the reformation, and Stuart Maclure reviews the Crossman Diaries.

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First Person

Arthur Marshall

Mind Your Own Business

'O fat white woman' runs the poem, 'whom nobody loves, why do you walk through the fields in gloves, missing so much and so much?' It has always seemed to me somewhat impertinent of Frances Cornford, though a gifted poetess and a delightful person in other ways, to have assumed, without supporting evidence of any kind, that 'nobody loves' the fat white lady, a politer word than 'woman', whom she saw, as we recall, from a train and who, strolling through the fields, happened to be wearing gloves (possibly a sensible precaution against midge bites). In my mind's eye I see the well known and widely anthologised event taking place on a Sunday morning in summer on a branch railway line somewhere in Cambridgeshire. The three-carriage local train, its engine puffing steam, chugs clanking round a bend and there, on one of the flat and soggy meadows for which that rather unlovely county is famous, can be seen a white and obese female figure sturdily making her way through the cowslips, the cow parsley, the cowpats, and, *ergo*, cows.

I do not understand why Mrs Cornford, comfortably settled in a window seat of a third class non-smoker, should have taken quite such an instant dislike to her. It was almost certainly the vicar's wife, released from the Matins for which she would naturally have donned gloves and off on an errand of mercy before lunch (blanket bath for poor old bedridden Mrs Merryweather). As a general rule, plump persons are jollier than skinny ones (well, take a look round your chums). Why not 'fat white woman whom *everyone* loves'? Perhaps Mrs Cornford had gulped her breakfast, now had indigestion and wanted to take the unpleasant pains out on somebody. There is another problem, the word 'white'. Was she wearing white, or had she a reddish face that she had conscientiously powdered down for church? Was the train passing through a predominately West Indian district and therefore a white woman was a rarity? We shall, I expect, in due course know the full circumstances. Who can doubt that somewhere in an American university, a diligent Eng. Lit. student with a half completed Cornford thesis is at this very moment struggling to identify the gloved stranger?

Impertinence, idiotic statements and stupid queries are, in the literary world, by no means confined to poetesses. Could any question possibly be more ill-judged than, in Isaiah, the cry of 'Watchman, what of the night?' The watchman, appointed by the Lord himself at an undisclosed salary but thought to be in the region of £22 a week with supper vouchers, has already, peering into the darkness with his eyes peeled, observed a two-horse chariot, a number of asses and camels, and just the one lion. What a moment for distracting him with a request for a weather forecast and time check, and indeed, all that the watchman can politely gasp out, probably wondering whether the lion has recently eaten, is that at some time or other it will be morning again, followed later on by another night, facts which were already plain to all.

Occasionally of course a poet provides a perfectly legitimate question. The ghost who materialises himself to an outwardly calm A. E. Housman and asks 'Is my team ploughing?' is, obviously, anxious for up-to-the-minute agricultural news from leafy Shropshire. The reference to 'team', hotly followed by a request for information about the local football XI and how they are making out on that rather bumpy river-side pitch, has led to confusion. Let me clarify. 'Team' here refers to horses. Footer involves, I am afraid, 'lads', a description that is sometimes, and in some mouths, a bit of a give-away, and here we have the word five times in eight verses. It always put Maurice Bowra on his guard ('Whenever I hear that unfortunate word 'lad', I sniff about for something discreditable').

In the field of tactlessness, Sir John Suckling's questions ('Why so pale and wan?') to a lovesick young man who is making no headway ('Why so dull and mute?') with his Miss Right, are extremely out of place. Whatever J. Suckling was knighted for, it can hardly have been *savoir-faire*. And about the poet Thomas Dekker, evil exploiter of a grossly underpaid labour-

force, NS readers will naturally wish me to speak very sharply. It was, admittedly, in 1632 but it's never too late to right a wrong. It is not quite clear exactly what the labour-force was labouring at. Can Dekker possibly be an early form of Decker and they were forerunners of the admirable firm of Black & Decker and were therefore manufacturing a primitive form of water-driven power tool? No matter, whatever it was and to keep them quiet, hateful and unscrupulous Dekker ceaselessly fed them with blatantly false information. He kicks off strongly. 'Art thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers?' he cries. Rubbish! Poverty means hunger, and hunger means empty stomachs, and empty stomachs produce ear-splitting rumbles and render slumber, golden or otherwise, out of the question for all but the stone-deaf. Briskly painting an entirely false picture of the horrors of being rich, and certain that he has now duped his hearers, he presses on with his real message, which is 'Work apace, apace, apace, apace', adding, as though it were some sort of comfort, 'Honest labour bears a lovely face.' We could all take him to some areas where it does no such thing. And then, abandoning all pretence, one can see him going skipping down the street on his way to the Boar's Head and a double sack with an almost unbelievably heartless cry of 'Then hey nonny nonny – hey nonny nonny!' Verse 2 is even more disgracefully misleading – the benefits of drinking water, the glory of enduring want, the deeply sad life of the wealthy, further cries of 'work apace', and more unbridled and delirious hey nonny nonnies all the way to the bank.

In the field of unreliability, unbalanced judgments and impertinent behaviour, there is nobody more hoity-toity and unsatisfactory than Wordsworth. I can hardly think that education at St John's College, Cambridge was responsible for such airs and graces. One is doubtful from the first. Anybody who can think so highly of the cuckoo ('Thrice welcome, darling of the spring!'), a deeply unattractive and morally depraved bird if ever there was one, is immediately suspect. And then, on a trip to Scotland he arrives at the charmingly demure little town of Yarrow in Selkirk, and what do we find: 'And is this – Yarrow? *This*?' The italics are the poet's own and especially offensive to the inhabitants. His fellow visitors to Selkirk fare as badly ('These tourists, Heaven preserve us, needs must live'). Travelling abroad is one long round of complaint ('A plague on your languages, German and Norse') and there was a singularly ill-informed view of the French revolution – 'Oh! pleasant exercise of hope and joy', and such cheery news to receive in the tumbril. No attempt is made to disguise grumpy moods ('Oh for a dirge!') and he is inconsiderate to a degree when, wishful for a companion for a slog over the fells, he bursts in on a crony deep in the latest thriller from Mudie's with a shout of 'Up! up! my friend and quit your books.' In all, a sorry record. I do not read modern poets because I can so seldom understand what they are talking about. But I bet they are a lot nicer. 'Scorn not the Sonnet' wails Wordsworth. But that's exactly what I plan to do.

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Letters to the Editor

Hoggart and the Gould Report

Sir, Richard Hoggart's assertion of 'fair-minded' liberalism (NS 14 October) begs several important questions.

First, he assumes that a clear distinction can be made between 'the extreme Left' and 'the Left who do recognise freedom of inquiry and of expression'. As one who would generally be regarded as 'extreme Left', because I support a political position to the left of the Labour and Communist Parties, I would ask what is Hoggart's evidence for his assumption that we are opposed to these freedoms? In fact we are utterly in favour of both, for everyone, with the one very specific and, we think, historically justified exception of *fascist organisations*. When some Left-wing students have extended these bans to others – for example, to academics like Eysenck whose theories are held to justify racialism, or (as recently) to Jewish Societies because they support Zionist racialists against Arabs – this has been opposed by far-Left organisations. (Robin Blackburn puts this position clearly in his article on Gould in *Socialist Challenge*, 13 October.) Marxist academics, whose very rights to teach and vote are certainly threatened by the implications of the Gould campaign, have *never* in any way suggested that their more conservative and right-wing colleagues should be denied these rights.

Secondly, Hoggart assumes that the Marxist view of universities, as they now exist, as institutions of capitalist society and its state, necessarily leads to a lack of respect for serious intellectual and scholarly standards within them. On the contrary, it leads us to distinguish between such standards, which we would uphold, and the hierarchical structures and formal conventions of higher education, which are as often impediments to serious intellectual work and real openness in teaching, as they are aids to them. But no one, I think, would subscribe to Hoggart's simplistic caricature, that higher educational institutions are '*wholly* to be defined as neutered agents for the continuance of capitalist society'.

Thirdly, Hoggart assumes that the views of the 'extreme Left' can be linked with the 'rigid management of consciousness' in Eastern Europe. But since the far Left has consistently opposed Stalinism, protested at the suppression of freedoms in the East, and defended the rights of expression of all dissidents, including right-wingers such as Solzhenitsyn, this equation just does not work. A more careful and 'fair-minded' approach to the clearly expressed views of the far Left is surely called for.

Finally, there are some very obvious objections to Hoggart's assumption that liberalism, even of a left social-democratic variety, can really safeguard the freedoms with which he is concerned. Surely he needs to explain the wholesale lurch into authoritarianism, in the universities and in society at large, on the part of liberals and social democrats in West Germany. Or in this country, the scandalous steps of our own Labour Government, with so very little protest from its own left wing or from liberals and social democrats in general, to limit our freedoms (the sweeping new police powers in the Terrorism Act, the deportation of Agee, the arrests of Aubrey, Berry and Campbell). Or the frequent cases of discrimination, and sometimes sacking, concerning Left-wing staff in our universities.

The real threat of illiberalism comes, surely, not even from the far Right (which is the home of the Institute for the Study of Conflict, sponsors of the Gould report), but from the authoritarianism which is deeply embedded in the political centre – and in the hearts of those who run our higher educational institutions. So many of the Gould-ISC team of academics are yesterday's liberals and social democrats. The liberalism of many more of Hoggart's colleagues is likely to prove equally skin-deep; West Germany *could* happen here. Richard Hoggart's quick acceptance of the basic theme of the Gould report, that the Left is a problem, would suggest that the retreat of even the more committed liberals is already under way.

MARTIN SHAW
Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology
University of Hull

A Tale of Scottish TV

Sir, When Phillip Whitehead telephoned me to say that he was preparing an article ('A Tale of Scottish TV', NS 28 October) about recent changes in our arrangements for producing current affairs and documentary programmes I expressed surprise that a relatively minor shift in plans and personnel should be raised to such eminent status. That I was right is borne out by his selective recitation of past criticisms of this company and by an apparent wish to see in the day-to-day minutiae of the workings of this (or any other) television station a disregard for an important area of programme production. I owe it to the audience here in Central Scotland and to our staff to correct this impression.

(1) This company's output of current affairs and documentary programmes (as distinct from news and specialised political, consumer and sports programmes) will be approximately doubled in the next 12 months. Resources of people and money have been increased accordingly. Our decision to make more current affairs programmes and fewer documentaries (but of a more ambitious nature) meant that the job which Christine Fox had been engaged to do, on a short-term contract to allow just such an appraisal to take place, was no longer what we wanted. She was told this at the earliest moment so that she could consider her personal future, and at the same time was invited to submit for consideration any documentary programme ideas which she might have.

(2) Phillip Whitehead resurrects the Annan view that '80 per cent of the people of Scotland deserved as good a service as the larger regions of England'. In amount of local material, they get from STV about double what those living in the major ITV regions receive from their contractors, who admittedly have the bulk of network programmes to produce. This STV output is also noticeably popular with the viewers. In the seven weeks since the beginning of the Autumn schedule in September, 29 locally-produced programmes have appeared in this area's Top Ten – many more than any other company achieved with its regional material. And these popular programmes have included news, sport, current affairs, the weekly serial, light entertainment and consumer affairs. It should also be noted that STV's income is half of that of the smallest of the major ITV companies.

(3) He uses extracts from Lord Hill's book in a very selective way. He quotes his Lordship as wanting STV replaced in 1968, and

About Oxford books

The Zimbabwe revolution

Ndabaningi Sithole is one of the founding fathers of Zimbabwe. First President of ZANU, he has been an implacable fighter for majority rule in his native land 'since before he was born', as Sir Roy Welensky once put it. No wonder the Smith regime in Rhodesia detained or jailed him for ten years. He wrote **Roots of a Revolution**, just published at £3.50, in prison. So as not to endanger his fellow nationalists, he cast his account in fictional form, but no more authentic work has been published by a black African about the injustices suffered by all the black people in Rhodesia, and of the first stages of resistance that are achieving the revolution to majority rule. The book exposes the political and social issues involved and the spectrum of attitudes in Rhodesia among both blacks and Europeans. Black African perceptions of their situation in Southern Africa under colonialism, and of the Europeans amongst them in the past, the present, and the future, have rarely been so clearly and directly put across. As a historical and sociological document, and as a dramatic story, **Roots of a Revolution** has genuine black power.

Elections in South Africa

With a general election imminent in South Africa, Kenneth Heard's book about the struggle for power within the formal political structures, **General Elections in South Africa 1943-1970**, £10, is of special interest. It takes the United Party victory of 1943 as its starting-point, the election in which General Smuts achieved his greatest personal triumph, only to suffer defeat five years later at the hands of the dour exponent of rigid Afrikaner nationalism, Dr D. F. Malan. Kenneth Heard examines each election and brings into clear focus the increasing polarization of political opinion among the white voters on the basis of home language. He maps the changing boundaries of party allegiance, and brings out the major issues: the outstanding events and government actions, and the responses of political parties to them. *Political Studies* called the book 'a valuable study, abounding with statistics which will interest the psephologist as well as the student of South African politics'.

NS readers may also be interested in **The Journal of Southern African Studies**, an international publication which aims at generating fresh scholarly inquiry in the fields of economics, sociology, demography, social anthropology, administration, law, political science, international relations, history, and the natural sciences. The region covered embraces the Republic of South Africa, with South West Africa (Namibia); Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland; Angola and Mozambique; Zambia, Malawi, Rhodesia; and, occasionally, Zaïre, the Malagasy Republic, and Mauritius. **The Journal of Southern African Studies** is published in April and October at an annual subscription of £7, single copies £3.50. Write to Oxford Journals, Press Road, Neasden, London NW10 0DD.

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then he guesses at reasons why Lord Hill was over-ruled, suggesting that it might have been because Lord Thomson had 'saved *The Times*'. But on p. 54 of the book Lord Hill gives a reason, which I quote with due modesty: 'Lord Thomson . . . taking it in good part when I said that he owed the decision to reappoint his company to Bill Brown and his colleagues.'

Phillip Whitehead talks of the 'ambitious and the artful' gathering to compete for the STV franchise. It is a phrase I have tucked away for future quotation, but in the meantime I hope that commentators of his reputation and experience will make judgments based on a knowledge of the product and not on the supposed consequences of comparatively minor staff changes.

WILLIAM BROWN
Managing Director
Scottish Television Ltd
Cowcaddens
Glasgow

Hain Explains

Sir, It is fair enough for James Fenton to rap me over the knuckles (NS 28 October). In retrospect perhaps I should have known better than to talk to Chapman Pincher when he rang me in September; for he quoted me out of context, giving the false impression I had resigned from the Liberals for reasons other than the ideological and principled ones I gave at the time. Frankly, however, I am relieved that Simon Hebditch and I progressed to Labour *before* the Thorpe affair broke afresh because otherwise James Fenton would have had even more difficulty reassuring the cynics that the reasons I gave him were the truth. Can you imagine trying to present a reasoned political justification for our decision in the aftermath of recent revelations?

Our prior knowledge of the disturbing findings of the forthcoming book, *The Pencourt File*, only accelerated a decision to join Labour which had, quite independently, been forming over the summer – because we did not want the political reasons for it to become intertwined with a completely different issue which, in any case, affects *all* three parties.

PETER HAIN
84 Fawe Park Road
London SW15

The Whirligig of Time

Sir, We live in odd times! The Prime Minister of Israel, a one-time political terrorist, sent a telegram to the Prime Minister of Western Germany congratulating the latter on the killing by his specialised police commando of political terrorists whose organisation, in turn, killed an ex-terrorist who at one time belonged to one of the most brutal terrorist organisations of all times, namely the SS!

One would have thought that Schleyer was hoist on his own petard: there was no need for Mr Begin to comment on the affair.

EDLER v. GEYER
Apapa
Lagos
Nigeria

What's in a Name?

Sir, I was disturbed to read the Crucifer paragraph that appeared in your issue of 30 September, but horrified when this was closely followed by a letter from Paul Rotha in the following week's edition agreeing with Crucifer that Ever Ready had – in a most off-hand manner – discontinued their supply of razor blades because 'they find batteries more profitable'. Worse still, both writers made it quite plain that they would never again buy Ever Ready batteries, and by their tone extolled your readers to follow suit.

My clients, The Ever Ready Company (Holdings) Limited, do not make razor blades, nor have they ever been associated with any company that does. They are, in fact, the world's second largest manufacturers of dry cell batteries. Our cursory investigations have shown that the company in question was originally called Ever Ready Razor Products and was eventually taken over by Phillip Morris, the cigarette manufacturers.

ANDREW KAYE
Executive Director
LPR (Public Relations) Ltd
17 Waterloo Place
Leamington Spa

Not So Innocent

Sir, A principal concern of the Portia Trust is to combat the physical shame of women and children. To suggest that officials of such a charity 'drool' over the beating of adolescent girls seems an odd way of defending corporal punishment in schools, and the offensive personalities introduced by Mr W. S. Brownlie (Letters, 21 October) compel me to observe that some previous contributors to this discussion have not declared their whole interest.

The endorsement of beating by 'Labour-dominated' education authorities in the North East was originally commended on 30 September by a correspondent who is – according to our information, from the Greater London Council – the present contractor for supplying all 'punishment canes' in schools under the Inner London Education Authority and outer London Boroughs. I simply noted, in replying, that when certain North East schools attracted publicity last year for beating adolescent girls, the individual incidents were repeatedly applauded in pornographic magazines devoted to flagellation. I am not going to rehearse the unpleasant particulars in the NS to gratify the curiosity of Mr W. S. Brownlie, who makes tasteless jokes about transferring to an English school which beats young women; who implies that in his own Strathclyde school corporal punishment is minimal and confined to 'naughty little boys'; but who on 13 March 1977 proudly told readers of the Glasgow *Sunday Mail* that he had personally thrashed an adolescent girl pupil with 'six of the belt'. Not that there was anything irregular in this last exercise of Mr Brownlie's 'professional judgment': corporal punishment in Scottish schools is nominally (albeit ineffectually) governed by a code of practice under which 'exceptional circumstances' justify the belting of young women by male teachers. Since this procedure is forbidden by the local regulations of 43 per cent of English and Welsh education authorities, your correspondent may prefer to stay where he is.

EDWARD BAKER
47a Hillfield Road
London NW6

Sir, Mr Brownlie's self-confessed interest in the pornography of flagellation should not distract us, as it was probably intended to, from the truth about corporal punishment in Scotland. If what he says about his own school is correct ('In a small minority of cases, usually involving naughty little boys, corporal punishment is chosen') it is a a highly atypical establishment.

In Edinburgh alone, according to the head teachers' own records, the number of strappings in a single term in 1974 was 10,000 (1,600 of which were of girls). This figure extended would make an annual total of over 30,000 strappings a year – the equivalent of nearly half the school population (70,00).

Not surprisingly, local record-keeping of this kind ceased abruptly after the collection of the 1974 figures, but a recent survey of 40 schools by the Scottish Council for Research in Education confirms the depressing picture. It shows that a strapping by the class teacher is by far the most common punishment for boys in the first three years of a typical Scottish secondary school, and that no fewer than 36 per cent of the boys in the schools in question had been strapped in the single fortnight covered by the survey.

To call this 'a tiny factor' in school life sounds like an attempt to sweep the dirt under the carpet. Equally misleading is Mr Brownlie's statement that 'every survey of pupil opinion has shown that the pupils are in favour of it'. Although the SCRE survey quoted above found that 67 per cent of pupils were in favour of teachers being allowed to use the strap, over half thought teachers could find a better method of discipline, and the recent National Children's Bureau survey of 16-year-olds found that 47 per cent thought that corporal punishment should never be used.

COLIN BAGNALL
Secretary
Society of Teachers Opposed to Physical Punishment
10 Lennox Gardens
Croydon, Surrey

The Politics of the Judiciary

Sir, Further to John Griffith (NS 21 October); on my call to the bar in 1930, following three years of evening self-tutoring after a hard day's slog in Fleet Street, I visualised myself becoming a distinguished member of the legal profession, earning a considerable income. As a first step I consulted the late Sir James Cassells KC, ex-*Morning Post*, and he said in blunt terms that unless I had sufficient cash to carry me over the next three or four years, which I hadn't, then I had better remain in journalism. Thus my hopes of emulating Marshall Hall, or Patrick Hastings, or Artemus Jones, were immediately shattered. Fortunately, I was promoted to the parliamentary scene, which was some financial consolation. It seems to me that newly-called barristers of limited means should be given financial assistance for their pupillage, and the first two years in chambers. Otherwise, barristers are likely to be exclusively from the middle and upper classes to the disadvantage of men like myself.

SIDNEY R. CAMPION
13 Argyle Court
Argyle Road
Southport

What the Wolf Child said

Sir, Nit-picking, if it has any critical validity, needs to be accurate. In his long, digressive review of my book, *The Wolf Children* (NS 28 October) Mr Nirad Chaudhuri levels the accusation that not being 'at home in Bengali life or history' I have made errors in the spelling and translation of some Bengali words. Without wishing to cast doubt on his authority on such matters, I must object when he deliberately misquotes my text in order to make his point.

The wolf child, Kamala, on her foster-mother's return from a visit to Ranchi, greeted her with the words 'Ma elo', which I translated as 'Mama come'. A simple statement of fact. Mr Chaudhuri however, suggests that mistakenly I gave her childish utterance an imperative flavour: he renders my translation as 'Mamma, come!' I should point out that the exclamation mark, the comma and indeed the extra 'm' are all his own work. Unfortunately there are many such mistakes in Mr Chaudhuri's review, but to give more than one example might be considered petty.

CHARLES MACLEAN
29 Colville Terrace
London W11

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

F. S. L. Lyons

Easter, 1916

The Damnable Question: A Study in Anglo-Irish Relations by GEORGE DANGERFIELD *Constable* £6.95

It is over 40 years since George Dangerfield wrote *The Strange Death of Liberal England*. If that book has since become what his publishers cautiously describe as 'a minor classic', this is not just because he grasped so long ago the fact which is now the historians' commonplace – that violence is endemic in our society – but because he was among the first to recognise that in England the onset of violence predated the first world war. Of the various kinds of violence he then investigated (they included the violence of suffragettes, syndicalists and politicians) it is the Irish violence which alone has retained what Churchill would have called its 'integrity'. Now adapting for his title an Asquithian rather than a Churchillian mode, Mr Dangerfield has examined in much greater detail an episode in the history of 'this most perplexing and damnable country'.

He has produced a readable and arresting book, but one not easy to classify. Ostensibly, it is a narrative account of the Irish question between 1906 and 1922. Of its 350 pages, however, only 90 relate to the period before 1914 and only 45 to the period after February 1919. Essentially, therefore, what we have is an extended inquiry into the murky years that lie between the Easter Rising and the beginning of the Anglo-Irish War. This is not exactly virgin soil and Mr Dangerfield's bibliography indicates clearly (though not quite comprehensively, since it omits important works by Patrick Buckland and D. G. Boyce) how much he owes to other men's exertions. In fairness, however, it should be said that he has also used contemporary records, particularly cabinet papers, to good effect, though such is the congestion in this field that some of the letters and documents he produces hot from the archives have a somewhat *réchauffé* appearance, having already been used in earlier studies.

Is Mr Dangerfield's book, then, really necessary, and does it help us towards a further understanding of a dark and bitter chapter in Anglo-Irish relations which is still relevant today? To both these questions we can confidently answer yes, for several reasons. One is that Mr Dangerfield, besides being a master of the telling phrase, has a great gift for summarising without simplifying. He treads the maze of events between 1916 and 1919 with accuracy and confidence; simply as narrative, his book's admirable lucidity is itself a contribution to knowledge. A second reason why the book succeeds is that, more than any other I have read, it relates the Irish question in the war years to the actual conduct of the war, reminding us, as we need always to be reminded, that British ignorance of Irish conditions is not just wilful but often a natural consequence of the pressure of momentous events upon individuals of limited capacity.

Above all, *The Damnable Question* is valuable because, if one may say so without disrespect, it is the work of an outsider, by which I mean one who has the ineffable advantage of standing outside Irish history and has thus escaped being moulded by it. Most of the books on this period have been written by Irish historians, and although their standards of scholarly objectivity are a great deal higher than they are sometimes given credit for, the fact remains that whatever side of the question they may take, or even if they take no side at all, they are indelibly marked by their Irishness. Most often this takes the form of an unconscious assumption that Ireland is the hub of the universe. Irishmen frequently seem to think that their affairs are conducted in a kind of celestial vacuum, and that the rest of creation hangs in breathless suspense while intricate solutions are pursued up and down 'the muddy byways of Fermanagh and Tyrone'. The reality, of course, is quite otherwise. Ireland, except at moments of extreme crisis, tends to be peripheral not central, and many of the mistakes in dealing with her spring from intermittent absence of mind rather than from concentrated malevolence.

This has always seemed particularly true of the various efforts which were made to achieve a Home Rule settlement in the two years after the Easter Rising. There was plenty of malevolence around, no doubt, especially amongst the Tory old guard, but the failure to capitalise on the collapse of the insurrection derived partly (as did the mishandling of its immediate aftermath) from genuine, if scarcely excusable, incomprehension, and partly from the sheer impossibility in the shadow of the Somme of standing back and taking a sane, long-term view.

The old Irish parliamentary party at Westminster, who were in a sense the main political casualties of 1916, always believed that the perfidious English plotted their downfall so as to clear the way for the final liquidation of the Irish extremists. This conspiracy implies far more fixity of purpose than either Asquith or Lloyd George were capable of, and there is nothing in Mr Dangerfield's analysis to support it. He does admittedly favour the notion that Lloyd George's endless procrastinations may have been politic rather than improvisatory, and in two important instances he is probably right. One was the deliberate delay in attempting to enforce conscription on Ireland until all danger of having to do so was past. The other was the failure to carry through a Home Rule settlement in the summer of 1916. Since Lloyd George promised quite opposite things to Irish Nationalists and Irish Unionists, and since internal divisions in the government made a settlement virtually impossible, Mr Dangerfield is on fairly safe ground in surmising that Lloyd George was more interested in prosecuting the war with Unionist colleagues than in infuriating them by thrusting Home Rule down their throats. In general, however, the more closely the wizard's Irish policy between 1916 and 1921 is studied, the less purposeful it seems – unless Micawberism be deemed a policy – and the more feverish appear his efforts to pull ever more unlikely rabbits out of an empty hat.

Ah, it will be said, but was not 1921 different, and did not the Anglo-Irish Treaty mark, in Lloyd George's words, 'the greatest day in the history of the British Empire'? Was it, and did it? For a while, indeed, it may have seemed so to the British, though hardly to the Irish of the south, who dissolved in civil war, or even to the Irish of the north, who got something they had never really wanted in the first place. Nowadays we look sideways at the Treaty and perhaps there is too much blood in our eyes for us to see it any other way. But it is a fact of history we have to live with and there seems little point in the one piece of wishful thinking Mr Dangerfield allows himself at the end of his book, when he speculates on what might have happened if in December 1921 the Irish had not been stampeded by Lloyd George's ultimatum and if they had held out for De Valera's formula of external association with the Empire. Would, or could, Lloyd George have waged the 'terrible and immediate war' he threatened, or would there have been more negotiation, more concessions, even perhaps a tightening of the screw upon the Ulster Unionists? We cannot tell, but perhaps the key to what actually happened, and much that subsequently flowed from it, is to be found in the verdict Mr Dangerfield earlier passes upon the competing terrorisms which the IRA and the Black and Tans waged against each other.

> The idea that their tormentors and killers actually represented a nation in arms was as alien to these Englishmen as it was to the Government that sent them. All this has become, with time, a peculiarly bitter example of the lack of imaginative intercourse which lay at the roots of Anglo-Irish history.

So indeed it lay; so, in large measure, it still lies.

Among this week's contributors:

F. S. L. LYONS is Provost of Trinity College, Dublin; his books include *Ireland Since the Famine* and the recently published biography, *Charles Stewart Parnell*. He is to give the Ford lectures in English History at Oxford after Christmas.

STUART HOLLAND is the author of *The Socialist Challenge*; he teaches economics at the University of Sussex.

VALENTINE CUNNINGHAM is working on a study of literature in the Thirties.

LORNA SAGE teaches English at the University of East Anglia; she is currently working on a book about Platonism.

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Paul Johnson

One Quartet

The Knox Brothers by PENELOPE FITZGERALD *Macmillan* £4.95

It is a commonplace that the clergy breed clever children. In the Renaissance many leading lights, such as Erasmus, were the products of informal clerical unions. When Protestant Europe renounced sacerdotal celibacy, the sons and daughters of clergymen became an important civilising element in the middle and upper reaches of society. They were well-educated, highly motivated, industrious, often ambitious; usually on the side of the angels. Late-Victorian times were the golden age of these gifted clerical families. The brood produced by Bishop Knox of Manchester was archetypical. He came of 'Black Ulster' clerical stock; his wife was the daughter of an eccentric missionary bishop, who in old age vanished into the deserts of Oman in the vain pursuit of Moslem converts. Both were strong evangelicals. They had six children. One was retarded; the remainder, four boys and a girl, all won scholarships to famous schools and universities and flourished in different fashions. The family background was scholarly, poverty-stricken (even after Knox got his bishopric), loving and awkward. When one of the boys brought home his fiancée, the Bishop pressed her hand and said: 'Well, my dear, I believe your influence is good. God moves in mysterious ways.' His wife added: 'I have always heard it said that your elder sister is handsomer, but I tell them the younger has more spirit.' The low-church Bishop was gratified by his sons' academic laurels but grieved by their religious development: Eddie became a mild agnostic, Dillwyn a King's College atheist, Wilfred an Anglo-Catholic and Ronald a Papist. It says something for the Bishop's spiritual priorities that only Ronald was cut out of his will.

Mrs Fitzgerald, Eddie's daughter, has conceived the excellent idea of writing the lives of these brothers. It is a work of *pietas*, no doubt, but also of some social and historical interest. In my view she has made one serious error. There are two ways to write a book of this kind. One is to follow the method used, for example, by Kenneth Rose in his admirable study of Lord Salisbury's children, *The Later Cecils*, and deal with each life in separate, complete sections. This seems to me the right one. Mrs Fitzgerald opts for a chronological treatment, darting about among the brothers as the years go by. This brings out the family unity but otherwise makes for confusion, particularly since she is weak on dates, getting into dreadful muddles over the Council of Trent and the Battle of Jutland. On the other hand, she does contrive to sketch the differing characters of the brothers with admirable clarity. It must be said, too, that there are no dull pages in her book, though much of her material is necessarily humdrum.

Eddie, the eldest, was the most relaxed of the quartet, with a conventional success-story, moving from light verse and essays (for which all the brothers had a gift) to the editorship of *Punch*. The account of Eddie is a depressing reminder that this illustrious magazine has no obvious connection with humour. When the staff were trying to get rid of Eddie's barnacle-like predecessor, Owen Seaman, an ultra-Tory devoted to pre-war patriotism and the Empire Exhibition, they conceived the idea of hiding under the table at an office luncheon. Mrs Fitzgerald relates:

> Seaman came in, looked round, signalled to the waiter to pull out his chair, sat down, and unfolded his napkin. After a little while the *Punch* staff crawled out, and also took their places. The editor said nothing, and no one ever knew what he thought.

I have the bound volumes of Eddie's time, and the improvement he brought about was only marginal. Brother Dillwyn had an even more fertile brain, of the crossword-puzzle type, which made him a brilliant code-breaker in both world wars; but, again, his humour does not communicate. His chief interest in life was a dim Greek mimographer called Herodas, whom he eventually translated for the Loeb Classics, in a tortured archaic version: 'La no reke hath she of what I say, but standeth goggling at me more agape than a crab' and 'Why mumblest ne freetongued descryest the price?' are examples.

Of the clerical brothers, Wilfred was enigmatic, devout, austere, angular and very awkward, like his father; many found him difficult, even rude, in manner. He took a vow of chastity and later helped to create an informal Anglican brotherhood, of which in due course he became Superior. He was a well-known figure in Cambridge and achieved some reputation as an early-church historian and authority on St Paul. Ronald, the most famous of the brothers, was also a celibate by nature and conviction, and a man of considerable spiritual passion, but no puritan. On the contrary, he enjoyed the company of what Mrs Fitzgerald calls 'carriage folk', especially pretty titled ladies, and spent his happiest years as a sort of domestic chaplain in their manor-houses.

By today's standards none of the brothers achieved much and their records will probably provoke fashionable sneers. Ronald was undoubtedly gifted but equally unlucky. He could be described as a collateral casualty of the first world war, in which his best friends were killed. When he joined the English Catholic Church, notorious in those days for grinding down intellectual converts, he made the mistake of not becoming a Jesuit. As a secular priest his talents were largely wasted. He spent years on a new English version of the Bible; it did not catch on and has long since been superseded. He wrote copiously – detective stories, glosses on Conan Doyle and Trollope, essays, sermons and works of devotion. They are not much read now, except possibly *Let Dons Delight*. His most lasting memorial is likely to be Evelyn Waugh's biography, reticent though it is.

Yet Mrs Fitzgerald's book does not leave one despondent. What made the Knoxes such worthwhile members of society was their sense of values. Each in his own way believed in truth, exactitude and a high quality of work. All acknowledged more elevated objects than worldly careers, and put the community before self. They made loyal and usually entertaining friends, and were much loved. Not a bad record for the Bishop to contemplate, from his evangelical elysium.

Stuart Holland

Tell Tales

Terrorism by WALTER LAQUEUR *Weidenfeld* £8.50

Walter Laqueur is one of those international travellers one would have thought most likely to succeed in gaining personal experience of terror by hijack. According to the jacket blurb on his most recent book he is not only Director of the Institute of Contemporary History and the Wiener Library in London, but also Chairman of the International Research Council of the Center of Strategic and International Studies in Washington, Professor of Modern History at the University of Tel Aviv, and Visiting Professor at the University of Harvard. On the other hand, of course, his statistical chances of death at short notice probably are higher in driving to any airport than at the hands of an aircraft gunman.

While this is not an example which he gives, it nonetheless is typical of Laqueur's approach to terrorism as an historical and contemporary phenomenon. His aim, at least in part, appears to have been to put the matter in proportion. He writes for instance, that

> seen in historical perspective, terrorism has been effective only in very specific circumstances. It has not succeeded against effective dictatorships, let alone modern totalitarian régimes. In democratic societies or against ineffective authoritarian régimes it has on occasion been more successful.

Laqueur admits that there have been exceptions, such as against Machado in Cuba in 1933 and against village headsmen by the Vietcong in the early 1960s – but leaves it at that.

In general he argues that terrorism frequently occurs where there are other, non-violent political alternatives and that, where it seemingly succeeds, its political results in the long run are often self-defeating. Thus he questions whether the Tupamaros are likely to have felt happy, in retrospect, about their victory over an allegedly liberal system. Otherwise he maintains that terrorism tends to gain publicity in inverse ratio to its political impact, citing one certainly plausible case in December 1975. At that time a group of terrorists of unknown provenance broke into the OPEC building in Vienna and kidnapped what were commonly seen at the time as some of the most powerful men in the world. They released them in return for the broadcast of an ideological statement on Austrian radio which, in Laqueur's words, 'might just as well have been read out in Chinese as far as the aver-

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age, baffled Austrian listener was concerned'.

Similarly, Laqueur downgrades the fears of nuclear holocaust resulting from terrorist use of either a home-made nuclear bomb or stolen tactical nuclear weapons. Though he does not exclude the possibility of their use at some point in the future, he concludes that 'the popular idea of a nuclear device produced in a garage and transported on a tricycle seems to belong for the time being to the world of fantasy'. So did Digby and Dan Dare, of course, until the advent of Sputnik and Space-Shuttle. One area where Laqueur has support for down-grading fear of terrorist super-weapons concerns not technical barriers to production so much as practical barriers in use. Bacterial and other poison gases have been available for some time but, like fall-out, are indiscriminate killers. Yet despite the effort at a balanced view, and despite much (frequently undigested) documentation, Laqueur's book remains partial, selective and inadequate. For all the depths of its footnotes, the judgments are remarkably shallow.

Some of his brief dismissals, as of the 'pol-sci' number crunchers who seek correlations between terror and unimagined variables, seem perfectly acceptable. What is less so is his dismissal of whole areas where terror has played a key role in ultimate political success, and where yesteryear's gaoled terrorist is today's established president. Mau-Mau, Kenya and Kenyatta constitute a case which, in a study ranging from Uruguay to Japan, via 19th-century Russia and the French Revolution, would at least seem worthy of analysis. But in Laqueur's book they do not even rate a mention. The same might be thought of Fenians, Eire and De Valera, with clear implications for the hopes – vain or otherwise – held in Ulster by the Provisional IRA. Similarly, if it comes to that, what was Lawrence doing when he blew up all those trains, and what did he expect the Arabs to learn from the experience?

It is this area between success and failure, between ineffective terrorism and effective para-military action, which Professor Laqueur really does not clarify. For instance, what distinguishes William Tell from an anonymous Provo marksman? Presumably not just the family touch, in Tell's case, the anonymity of the other, or the different weaponry. A clearer difference is the fact that Tell's people won, while the Provos to date have not. Besides, particularly in cases such as the Palestinians, it is not at all apparent that terrorism is occurring in contexts where there are feasible, political, non-violent alternatives.

Rousseau was right to emphasise the difference between formal and effective democracy – in the sense that some groups, on religious or other grounds, can find themselves permanently outvoted, politically dominated and in practice outcast. For most of us this does not justify terrorism. But the failure – for decades – to resolve the problem of the Palestinian refugees, or to discriminate effectively in favour of permanent minority groups, at least makes their recourse to violence more intelligible.

It is such understanding which is notably missing in Professor Laqueur's analysis. He argues, with good reason, that governments cannot possibly satisfy all the [illegible]

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all groups in society all the time. On the other hand, if they cannot resolve at least some key problems some of the time, they should not be surprised by protest. It certainly does not help very much to resort to the crude social psychology with which Laqueur disgraces contemporary terrorist motivation in general.

> 19th-century nationalist terrorists were fighting for freedom from domination, but of late appetites have grown; the Basques have design on Galicia, the Palestinians want not only the West Bank but to destroy the Jewish state, the IRA would like to bomb the Protestants into a united Ireland. The aims of terrorism, in brief, have changed, and so have the terrorists.

How can he fail to see that Basque, Palestinian and Irish terrorists regard themselves precisely as fighting for freedom from domination? He may not agree with them, but if anything the line of succession from 19th-century precedents is all too clear.

Anthony Howard

Last Acts

The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister Volume III by RICHARD CROSSMAN *Hamish Hamilton & Cape* £12.50

'Dick', Harold Wilson confided to a Radio 3 interviewer the other day, 'was a very special problem.' And so, for Sir Harold, he remains. From the moment Volume I of these *Diaries* was defiantly serialised in the *Sunday Times* over two years ago, any hope Labour's last Prime Minister ever had of foisting his own version of his 1964-70 government on to a gullible public had gone for good. There is simply no way of reconciling Wilson's own majestic, imperturbable account of those five-and-a-half years with Crossman's set of instant action replays. And historians, of course, will not spend much time gazing up at Sir Harold's own literary obelisk, *The Labour Government 1964-70: A Personal Record*. Instead they will rush, like exhilarated archaeologists, into the Tutankhamen's tomb of the Crossman *Diaries*.

Nevertheless, in its third chamber the tomb has got a bit out of hand. The treasure may still be there but so is an awful lot of junk – something that Crossman himself seemed to realise even as he was busy stuffing everything in. 'I am very much aware', he characteristically blurts out at one stage, 'that this diary has sometimes been dull' – and goes on later to put his finger on one of its real weaknesses:

> I am trying to stoke as much as I can into this diary which, I realise, isn't a real diary but a kind of Acts of the Apostles – acts not thoughts, because I don't really have enough accounts of people and conversations.

Some Acts, some Apostles! But it isn't only that which makes this third volume (a fourth apparently is eventually to follow on Crossman's backbench Bevanite days – though that will be a separate and distinct enterprise) the least satisfactory to date. Crossman is no longer writing with any unity of purpose or central theme: Pepys has finally triumphed over Bagehot and, though the vignettes are still as good as ever, they now have to stand in their own right and not as illustrations of any constitutional theory about the 'myth' of cabinet government or the 'absolute' nature of prime ministerial power.

In fact, in the last two years of the 1964-70 Wilson government – which this volume covers – Crossman's original thesis takes something of a knock. During the battle over 'In Place of Strife' cabinet government *did* work and a Prime Minister *was* humiliated, a fact that Crossman himself has to concede:

> It became clear that Harold's self-confidence, complacency, bounce and good temper were all breaking down. At one point he said, 'Well, you're all giving this up because it's unpopular. You're soft, you're cowardly, you're lily-livered . . .' He was a little man for the first time dragged down on our level. It was painful because in a sense he was sabotaged and utterly nonplussed.

For a self-proclaimed champion of cabinet government, such an episode, one might have thought, would have been not so much 'painful' as reassuring – but, as always, it is Crossman's strange, half-despising and half-affectionate relationship with Harold Wilson that flavours his whole account of the crisis. Not that Wilson any longer dominates the stage as he initially did: besides Crossman himself, three other members of the cabinet – Castle, Callaghan and Jenkins – emerge in this last volume as fully-drawn characters. Of the three, the portrait of Jenkins is probably the most percipient and certainly the most devastating. Crossman, though he desperately tried to be friends with him, finally got his number. The cumulative impression is of an essentially self-centred man – a kind of failed British Giscard, caring far more about his own fame than the Labour Party's fortunes. If I have a favourite anecdote in the whole book, it is the one in which Jenkins is grandly quoted as saying, 'I have never found Birmingham quite as depressing as you find Coventry' – only to be annihilated by Crossman suddenly recalling a remark made by Roy's wife, Jennifer, to her husband a few days earlier: 'You haven't canvassed there for 24 years.'

By contrast, Callaghan tends to be given the benefit of the doubt, even when he announces, 'All I care about is the party.' Although certainly not unbruised, he is presented throughout as a heavyweight politician who not only knows his strength but punches his weight as well. Whatever their quarrels, Crossman always regarded him – as he wrote in 1970 in the NS – as 'the anchor man' of the Labour Party.

Which leaves only Barbara Castle, the one political character in the book portrayed with genuine affection. Of course nothing can disguise the political defeat she suffered in 1969; and, no doubt, the account given by Crossman of the whole 'In Place of Strife' débâcle is one that she will keenly resent. She should not: no other politician in the entire *Diaries* comes across anything like as sympathetically – even if Crossman's final description of her as 'a real Girl Guider' is one in which chauvinism seems somehow to prevail over chivalry.

Yet in the end, of course, in any diary there can be only one central character. And it is here that this volume finally finds its vindication. True, the challenge of breathing excitement into the musty corridors of the DHSS – to say nothing of blowing life back into the long-dead embers of the battles over national superannuation and the Parliament (No 2) Bill – is something that defeats even as accomplished a journalist as the author of these *Diaries*. But that does not matter – for drenching everything is the authentic living flavour of Crossman's own personality. Most politicians when they come to write their memoirs in comparative old age (and Crossman was already over 60 when this particular volume was being dictated) tend to carve marble busts of themselves. No one can claim that Crossman has done that.

It is all there – the mixture of the democrat and the autocrat, the conflict between the populist and the patrician, even the zest of the socialite mingling incongruously with the zeal of the socialist. There is not a note in this book that will ring false to anyone who ever came into contact (or collision) with Dick's infuriating, invigorating and in some ways, strangely innocent character. Innocent? Here is one last quotation. Dick has just delivered a speech about Chaim Weizmann at a formal Jewish dinner and is genuinely puzzled as to why it went so well. It is left for his wife Anne to give him the answer: 'Well, you weren't talking about Harold Wilson, were you? You were talking about a leader you really admired.' If Wilson had 'a problem', then so did someone else.

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Julian Barnes

Daddy O

Aristotle Onassis by NICHOLAS FRASER, PHILIP JACOBSON, MARK OTTAWAY and LEWIS CHESTER *Weidenfeld* £6.50

Three years ago, in the men's room of the Crazy Horse Saloon in Paris, Aristotle Onassis offered a fawning paparazzo a scoop – 'a photograph of the secret of my success'. As the camera was unslung, the squat scoundrel unzipped his fly, extended his 68-year-old membrum virile on the saucer provided for patrons' tips, and quipped, 'There you are – that is my secret, sex and money.' He then laughed so much at his own joke that he dropped the saucer and broke it. In a long and often needlessly researched biography, this is – despite the authors' claims about his 'quotability' – one of only two memorable remarks made by the dumpy international wide-boy.

Onassis's dubious business methods were developed early. As a schoolboy, he used to steal the tips his father gave him to pass on to doorkeepers and messengers. As a young import-export agent in Buenos Aires, he arranged to have a cargo of tobacco sprayed with salt water in Genoa, and then claimed 'sea damage' from the insurers; at the same time, he was using his position as deputy Greek consul for black-market currency swindling. He bought ships; the war came; and while other Greek shipowners helped the allied cause and lost vessels, Onassis remained safely in America, providing Veronica Lake with nylons ('We sat in LA, screwing the girls,' an associate recalled, '. . . it was a very quiet war'). After the war, he extended his operations, and was fined $7m. for infractions of maritime law; he then moved into whaling, where his ships killed every whale they saw, regardless of size, species and season, in one of the worst outrages in whaling history. The chances of Suez netted him $60-70m. He founded Olympic Airways, and bled its profits away from Greece to avoid paying tax. Throughout his career he used cheap labour, Panamanian flags and Liberian tax laws; what was legal, in his eyes, was what you could get away with.

Nor was the private life of the plump yob any more savoury. He once complained of piles to a mistress, and asked her shyly to examine his fundament; when she did, he jokily farted in her face. This was Ari's idea of good fun. He also beat the woman up on suspicion of infidelity while regularly boasting to her of his own chubby profligacies; she later tried to kill herself. He had a mobster's disdain for culture, gratifyingly hideous taste in furnishings, and aesthetic responses which were fully extended by Maria Callas's bed. His marriages – to Tina Livanos and Jackie Kennedy – were contracted with an eye to the business and social leg-up they would provide. An overbearing egomaniac, Daddy O deformed his children's lives, using financial pressure to bend them to his will. As Helen Vlachos put it, he was 'always a taker, never a giver'.

So what – apart from the cheque-book and the chopper – was the secret? Or indeed, was there a secret, other than that Onassis was a rich shit who happened to be much richer and quite a bit shittier than most? Lord Moran (whom the authors lightly dismiss as 'an able doctor and diarist but a somewhat unimaginative man') found him 'a very ordinary man to be set apart'. Their reply is that Moran had failed to spot Ari's 'intense quality of attention': he made you feel special when you talked to him. Not much, is it? But then, it often seems to have worked; it even seems to have reached out from the grave to cow these four *Sunday Times* 'Insight' men.

Fraser, Jacobson, Ottoway and Chester know a lot of facts, but they seem not to know why they want to know them. Not for the first time, Onassis's fame and success appear to have anaesthetised the moral senses of those writing about him; or, more charitably, perhaps it is just hard for four people to come to one judgment. In describing the young tycoon's experiences in Turkish-occupied Smyrna, they list the fantasies with which he subsequently used to impress people: 'he had seen his uncles hang, he told his friends' (which was not true); 'he had rescued the funds of Ethniki Amina and had taken them to Greece' (which was not true); 'he had even swum from the quayside to the USS Edsall' (which was not true). 'These lies,' the authors go on, '*if that is the name for them . . .*' What else could they possibly be, if not lies? Well, the authors suggest they were 'personally necessary for him, a means of constructing a self he could rely on in the hard [*sic*] life he had decided on'. One might as well say that Onassis's crookery, deceptions, sharp practice, ecological devastation, and sexual and emotional thuggery were also merely forgiveable means of constructing the self he wanted to be – the fattest toad on the pile. And what could be more human than that? Fortunately, Ari himself, in his other memorable quote of the book, undermines the quaint pusillanimity of his chroniclers: 'Be rich,' he once said, 'or be an enemy of the rich. I understand both. But never envy the rich and try to please them.' No problem.

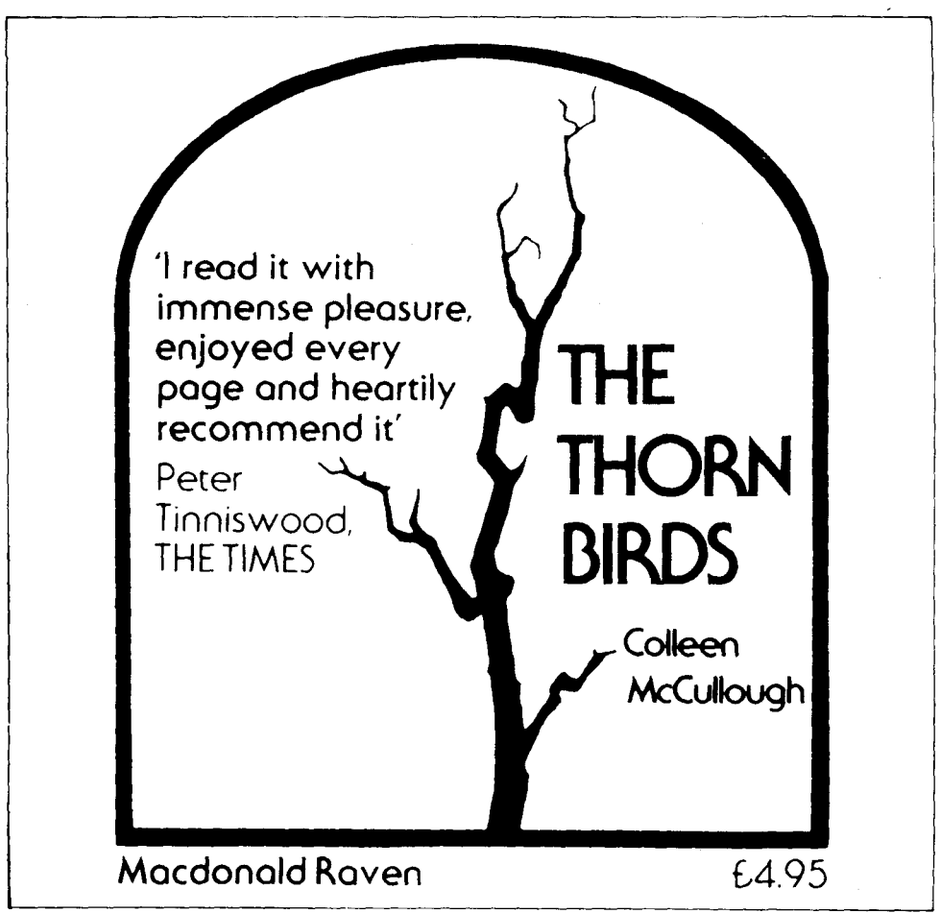
Hugo Young

Assumptions

The Politics of the Judiciary by J. A. G. GRIFFITH *Manchester University Press* £4.95 and *Fontana* £1.25

The Politics of the Media by JOHN WHALE *Manchester University Press* £4.50 and *Fontana* £1

In the case brought by Mr George Ward against the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, which now awaits the opinion of the House of Lords, the Court of Appeal, led by Lord Denning, gave an apparently very unDenning-like judgment. It ruled that because ACAS had been unable to conduct a ballot of all the employees at the Grunwick photo processing factory, but only among the Grunwick strikers, its recommendations were invalid. This overturned the judgment of the Lord Chief Justice. It was also a stout blow against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common sense, because one of its effects would be to make much of ACAS's work vulnerable to obstruction by any bloody-minded employer or, for that matter, union. To reach this conclusion, the Court of Appeal had to penetrate deep into the technicalities of the statute. And deploying fine print to override pragmatic commonsense is, on both counts, the reverse of Lord Denning's usual practice.

Earlier this year, in Mr Gouriet's case against the Postal Workers Union, the Master of the Rolls acted more in character. Confronted with the ancient prerogative of the Attorney-General to determine, without appeal, whether certain classes of prosecution are in the public interest, he decided that this was a technicality which should be swept aside in the interest of some higher justice. After an acrimonious hearing, Lord Denning delivered a memorable philippic against over-mighty ministers, only to be weightily contradicted by a unanimous House of Lords.

Grunwick came too late for Professor Griffith's book, but this pair of cases precisely illustrates his theme. The consistent thread in both the Denning judgments, transcending the inconsistency of his legal method, was his success in finding against an organised trade union and in favour of the litigant who challenged it. An anti-union bias is one of several prejudices Professor Griffith imputes to the higher judiciary. By his reckoning they are, for the most part, anti-student and pro-police, illiberal on race, reactionary in their moral attitudes and supporters of the established order in all its manifestations. He describes these as 'unconscious assumptions' rather than political positions. Surveying a range of cases in industrial relations, official secrecy, conspiracy and other fields of 'public' law, he is at pains not to blame the judges for their shortcomings but adopts, rather, an air of resigned acceptance of their predicament, and wishes us to do the same.

These books are the first contributions to a potentially significant new Fontana series, designed to do for politics what the Modern Masters series has done for philosophy and literature. The brief is to be concise, authoritative, non-technical, yet to aim higher than what the editors (Bernard Crick and Patrick Seyd) dismissively describe as 'journalism'. This is an absurd donnish conceit. Both Professor Griffith and Mr Whale have written good journalism in permanent form: which means that both books are accessible, stimulating and carry hardly a redundant line between them. But the Griffith book is something more. Simply because the law and the judges are so rarely written about, it is something of a groundbreaker. And since it is explicitly addressed to the lay – and therefore possibly unwary – reader, a cautionary note is appropriate. Although the author packs a formidable quantity of information into the small space imposed by the format, there are times when his highly pessimistic view of the judiciary colours the expository as well as the overtly polemical sections of the book. He performs the necessary task of reminding us that judges are not value-free automata, mining away at a finite deposit called 'the law', a delusion which the legal profession does its best to preserve in the public mind.

On the other hand, when dealing for example with the recent sequence of 'anti-executive' cases, from Tameside to Laker Airways, Professor Griffith gives less credit than he might to judgments which challenge his overall contention that the judiciary tends typically to be on the side of authority and its highest embodiment, the State. No one could seriously contest his assertion that, when the very fabric of society is threatened, judges will invariably spring to its defence. But on the more subtle and pervasive question of how power shall be regulated between the individual and large groups of all kinds, the record is more variable, and finds judges filling less reliably the stereotype in which the Professor would confine them. English legal training still does not give a proper place to the politics of the law. With or without a Bill of Rights, as we have seen in the recent cases, judges are being required to enter the political arena. Quite apart from the growing challenge to ministers who act *ultra vires*, the Treaty of Rome is slowly creating a new body of work for judges to do. Devolution will add to this, as the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council becomes a frankly constitutional court. For none of this do many judges have either appetite or aptitude. Maybe they fall back on their prejudices, as Professor Griffith outlines them. The consequence should be, however, not a greater reluctance to allow judges a role in political matters (as many politicians, especially Labour politicians, instinctively feel), but a recognition that the tide is irreversible.

Mr Whale's book is less contentious. It briskly surveys the history of press, radio and television since the war, recording all the salient events and controversies of the period, and summarising the numerous official inquiries which seem to have littered it. Unlike many books directed at the intelligent sixth-former and above, it can be warmly recommended for its writing as well as its thoroughness. If it has an underlying political position, it is different from Professor Griffith's. Whereas the judges emerge as representative of the tiny ruling group which allegedly runs Britain, John Whale's most valuable achievement is to disabuse those who might imagine that the media are a conspiracy against the people operated by a handful of tycoons.

The Dawning of Curiosity

Colloquies on World Consciousness

Edited by JARVIS BROOK

Hermitage, an independent movement in the study of consciousness, has for many years striven to interest those with whom it has come into contact in the possibility of a fresh approach to the problems of and an investigation into the function of intelligence.

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Roger Garfitt

Waiting for the Day

Plimsoles takes the floor. Blossoms as
the bar
whoops and whistles. As if he were
treading water, as if rough music were
the water
where a strange nature uncurls and flowers,
he slow-motions to the door. Already
in replay
an old clip run and re-run, his white hipster
step and flare. His white raincoat
capes and swirls. He is all woman.
We are all eyes.

Sullen, in black, his fetch
steps tersely at his side.

Shanghai? Marseilles? Tilbury.
Last light over warehouse roofs.
Darkness asphalts the waste ground.

Not a sound when he re-enters.
Buys an armful of beer cans. Outside,
hurls them one by one against the wall,

repeatedly. Gathers them up, shoulders
hunched in the white T-shirt.
Cradles them back to the ship.

We nurse our halves. Tomorrow
if a crew is short – someone
fails to report – one of us
will get a ship. On completion
of the trip, union papers.

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Valentine Cunningham

Lacklust

The Farewell Party by MILAN KUNDERA *Murray* £3.95
Having It Away by PATRICE CHAPLIN *Duckworth* £3.95
Dreams Die First by HAROLD ROBBINS *NEL* £4.95
Shall We Tell The President? by JEFFREY ARCHER *Cape* £3.95

Dissidence is, almost by definition, dissonance, and discordances that régimes find jangling should have little trouble upsetting us too. Certainly the latest novel of the exiled Milan Kundera to be banned in his native Czechoslovakia isn't the sort of pat protest package whose points can be assumed to apply only to *them* – whose points can be assumed at all. Set in a Spa famed for inducing fertility in women, *The Farewell Party* makes a provokingly odd bricollage, an engagingly choppy montage of strange people and curious events. Uniformed oldsters round up crapping dogs with wire loops on long poles; a famous jazz trumpeter agrees to appear with the Spa physician playing drums, in order to obtain an abortion for an embarrassing girl friend; fat old ladies preen for the telly cameras in the Spa waters; a wealthy American's painting of St Lazarus has a blue halo that glows at night; the physician is artificially inseminating all his patients with his own sperm.

That the sweaty-pore close-ups should recall some Eastern European movies isn't, it appears, accidental: Kundera was a Professor of Film and taught lots of Czechs, including Forman himself, their stuff. The images persist; what coherence they might possess comes from the talk of the American, the doctor, and his friend Jakub, the disgraced politician about to leave the country. Herod, they agree, was a good politician when he massacred the Innocents. Modern Hell is recognising that the oppressor and the victim are one. And Jakub hands his poison-pill to a girl he's branded as the dog-catchers' – and thus the human-catchers' – friend: he's the victim become murderer. In Christ alone is goodness and joy, the American insists, buying pleasures with silver dollars. The doctor is building a nation of actual brothers, but he covers up for Jakub. And so on: the ironies are a bit messy, indeed messily bitty, but they rebound most unsettlingly: powerful, in fact, with the might of dissonance.

The horrors *Having It Away* unfolds are much more consolingly domestic and come more cheerfully gift-wrapped in fall-about comedy. A couple of wives, Charmian and Jenny, their five children, and Charmian's lover Norman head for six weeks of sun and sex in Spain, where Jenny too has a lover – Luis. The kids are, of course, the fly in the ointment – actually, swarming broods of flies in stunningly original varieties as Little Peter contaminates rented house and garden with his free-range poo-poos. Charmian is lazy and flopping drunk, when she's not down the village tavern innocently, if aptly, learning to bawl in Spanish that she screws like a lion; Little Peter waxes Oedipal about her siestas with Norman; Norman gets rapidly disgruntled under the dead weight of unaccustomed domesticity; and Luis has enough problems with his lumpy benefactress to regret Jenny's presence. The flies prosper, the whole coast is aghast with rumours of a lesbian brothel (in which shopping, pram-toting Norman is billed as a transvestite), and chaos mounts as the spilled juice, the spat-out lettuce, the butts and ash accumulate underfoot.

The fun hereabouts – and your reviewer quite ached from hooting in aghast recognition – can't, of course, last, and nor does Patrice Chaplin try to make it. Charmian brings the house down, and the novel to a close, by lurching boozily on stage to embrace Luis with amorous intent just as he's presenting his fat fiancée with the town's medal for artistic achievement. Will Norman stick with Charmian, will Luis and his suitcase load of bleach and fly-sprays do for Jenny? The story eschews reply, content to stop while it's still slim-line, a hip-flask good for a few potent slugs.

Harold Robbins needs reviewers like holes in the purse, which is just as well since the mildest critical scrutiny blows his latest Titanic right out of the water. *Dreams Die First* is shoddy, a formulaic compilation about sex and drugs and violence and money, which makes no effort to be even slightly new or mildly inventive about the fantasies it's contemptuously trafficking. Gareth, a sluggishly AC-DC writer, born rich but happy to be 'superrich' if thrust that way, falls into the porno magazine business and into wealth just inside the bankers' dreams of avarice. The novel pokes at lots of interesting, even serious, matters, like sadism among gays, faith-healing rackets, and analogies between the Vietnam conflict and the war in the American city, but it never grips any of them hard. Having an orgasm, or clap, or a beating, or a fortune, is all one; the novel remains lacklust about all of its people's comings and goings. Even the porn trade and the impressively endowed King Dong fail to give the prose a lift. Nothing at all, it seems, matters much: and that's a rattling state for any novelist, even a household name, to be in.

Where Harold Robbins's fiction slops along, Jeffrey Archer's creaks with keenness to straighten out for you every fact in his dossiers. Here's a plot to shoot President Edward Kennedy, and plausible enough it's made, especially if you like watching repeats of old movies. There's even a nicely developed if obvious set of parallels with Julius Caesar – man and drama. But it's the manner of the author's address to his narrative that irks most. He's a swot who will show off his busyness about the Washington street-map, constitutional amendments, FBI history and the layout of the Senate. Naturally, the FBI agent who unravels the plot spends his time posing as a student doing research, for what else has his author been doing? Index cards and their dimensions keep getting mentioned: sure signs of an outsider's story. And good novels are inside stories.

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CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Lorna Sage

Sympathy for the Devil

The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar by ROALD DAHL *Cape* £3.50
The Wonder-Dog: Collected Children's Stories by RICHARD HUGHES *Chatto* £3.95

The debates about television violence have taken much of the spice out of arguments about children's fiction. A pity, really, since books were always a great deal more inventively nasty (and problematic) than Starsky and Hutch. You can't, for example, imagine most of the participants in the present rows over television's depravity racked with the ambiguity that afflicts educationalists faced with the 'classics': witness one rather embarrassed critic, Nicholas Tucker – 'passages like . . . the one in the . . . *Brown Fairy Book* by Andrew Lang where a beautiful girl is first whipped and then made to eat dog manure, are still fundamentally a matter of taste.' Mr Tucker used to be an educational psychologist for the ILEA. While one may wince at his whinging, though, he does have good reasons for being confused. Children *are* allowed horrors and delights adults can't exactly justify inflicting on them, in stories. And that's not likely to change – indeed, one odd side-effect of the television bogey is that nowadays children who read or get read to at all are assumed to be doing themselves some good.

Time-honoured 'fairy-tale' permissiveness is also one reason why critical attempts to distinguish between writing for children and writing for adults always founder. Only publishers (as with the benighted and condescending 'young adults' books) and Sunday School prize-givers have consistently tried, for underhand motives, to keep up the notion that clear borderlines exist. Roald Dahl and Richard Hughes, as writers who tried both, bear this out. It's easy, of course, to show that in their stories for children they deliberately reduce the world to scale – parents are briskly disposed of (eaten by a rhinoceros, turned to wood, simply shrunk), and other adults turned into monsters of nastiness or (occasionally) goodness; grandparents are usually all right, if only because they're senile and silly, and there are various miniaturised beings (Dahl's Ooompa-Loompas, Hughes's talking toys) to make children feel enormous and self-important. But if you turn to their fiction for grown-ups, alarmingly similar conventions apply. Mrs Elvira Ponsonby in Dahl's 1965 story 'Bitch', for instance, is obviously seen from a little boy's point of view:

> . . . the metallic silver-blue hair with every strand glued into place, the brown pig-eyes, the long sharp nose sniffing for trouble, the curled lips, the prognathous jaw, the powder, the mascara, the scarlet lipstick and, most shattering of all, the massive shored-up bosom that projected like a balcony in front of her.

I suspect he used the word 'prognathous' only to distance this from the nursery; certainly, his adult stories are reckoned so black because their narrators have the same unblinking, callous (and fearful) gaze as his child heroes. Some of the pleasant moments in Richard Hughes's *Human Predicament* novels also take on the tone of the children's story-teller – as when paralysed Mary in *The Wooden Shepherdess* gets interfered with in her sleep by husband Gilbert: '. . . at night it gave him a strangely elated feeling I can't describe to be handling Mary's body while Mary slept without it possibly waking her'. And it comes quite naturally to imagine Baldwin during a cabinet crisis having an infantile nightmare – 'He dreamed he was balanced on top of a toy-cupboard filled with dolls; and one turned into a tiger.' On this showing, you might well conclude that the conventions of children's writing have a peculiarly chilling and demoralising effect when applied to adult fiction. Full-time adult authors are apt to be more sympathetic, or at least more squeamish.

So I think one should take Roald Dahl's note at the beginning of *The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar* – 'This book is dedicated with affection and sympathy to all young people . . . who are going through that long and difficult metamorphosis when they are no longer children and have not yet become adults' – in a slightly special sense. He means 'sympathy', since adults are for the most part so awful, and he has therefore no desire to speed up the process of entering the so-called real world. Instead he opts for aggressive magic, not only miracle twists of plot and stories within stories, but also an inside story of his own career, full of urgent propaganda about finding a vocation, which seems to be the only form of growing up he believes in. One of the shorter pieces, 'The Hitch-Hiker' is a fair sample of his narrative ingenuity: the hitch-hiker longs to boast about his profession, but can't until he's got the driver on the wrong side of the law. Once they've been picked up for speeding (by a revoltingly 'meaty' traffic cop, a typical adult) he can admit that he's a superlative 'fingersmith'. He removes the narrator's belt, shoelace, watch and so on to prove it, and only then reveals that he removed the policeman's notebook too. 'The secret of life', he says 'is to become very very good at somethin' that's very very 'ard to do.'

An amoral tale, you might think, but not really, from Dahl's point of view, since the narrator starts off infatuated with his expensive car ('terrific acceleration . . . genuine soft leather') and ends up awed by his passenger's discipline and dexterity. Likewise in the title story, wealthy parasitic Henry studies the disciplines of yoga in the hope of being able to see through playing-cards, and succeeds, only to find that the fun has gone out of gambling; it takes immense cunning (disguises, Swiss bank accounts) to get the fun back by giving all his winnings away. It's the Dahl version of Scrooge, this one, with cards and stocks replacing the ledgers and money boxes that Marley's ghost used to clank around in, and the delight of mental concentration instead of Tiny Tim. Dahl's account of how he became a writer turns out to have a similar twist: the misery of prep school and

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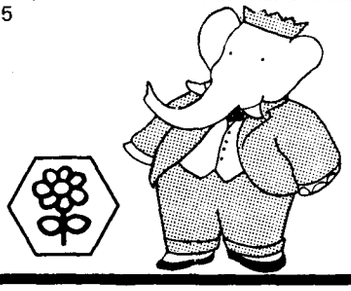

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Repton, the excitement of working for Shell in East Africa, and even his narrow escape from death as a fighter-pilot, are almost incidental compared with the moment he put pen to paper in 1942: 'For the first time in my life, I became totally absorbed in what I was doing . . .' He reprints that story here and insists that the real vividness was in the telling, not – as you might expect – in the frying alive.

It's a collection with an obsession but, except in the animal stories (where the humans are too obviously monsters), that does little harm. What he would most like to do, though, and can't, is to hand over directly to his readers (threatened with adulthood) a sense of vocation and personal magic that will set them apart from the ordinary life-sized world he regards with such profound dislike.

Apart from the title story, all the brief, slightly breathless pieces in *The Wonder-Dog* had of course been published long ago. Richard Hughes's modest preface, written just before he died last year, explains something about the style: he only wrote down stories recalled to him by the children in his audience ('Almost every story has been through a child's mind and back to me again like this') and the same audience often suggested the characters and properties in the first place. This ultra-democratic method of composition, combined with Anthony Maitland's pretty, plentiful, 1940s-style illustrations, makes the book altogether redolent of childhoods past, enlivened by tin dolls and braces buttons, and haunted by tapioca, cold mutton and Nurse.

Bad jokes about food were popular, and I imagine still are: a little girl who lives inside a whale and has to be fed rice pudding down a tube made of a sawn-off snake; a small boy's culinary triumph with sugar cubes and a dead sparrow, 'a beautiful birdcage made of sugar, with a sugar bird inside,' which still doesn't persuade his parents to stay in for supper; an experiment with boiling the kettle (in a saucepan). Space is another problem: either children grow too fast, or are too many and have to be hung out of the windows in lobster pots. And horrible feelings of loneliness (there were evacuees among Hughes's listeners) are added on to the routine terrors.

As in other 'classics' it's being ingenious rather than being good that gets you out of trouble. Hughes deals beautifully with the most unlikely items thrown in his way by mischievous collaborators, a giant's wig, for instance, in 'Living in W'ales': 'So she made it into a door mat, and the alsatian dog went to sleep on it.' He's also a master of the surprise ending, where the magical youth leaves before the wedding, or the wicked mouse escapes.

In the midst of the hectic metamorphoses of dolls into children, dogs into china and parrots into witches (into District Nurses) there's still time for the odd meditation on philosophy ('perhaps dolls couldn't buy *dolls*') or on education ('how to tell one kind of smelly slime from another'). The most engaging thing about it all is the polite but determined distrust of doing what one's told. One story features a pathetic herd of white elephants terrorised by a rabbit. 'But what is there disobedient we can do?' they ask. Hughes's children could have told them.

Christmas presents from Oxford

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Rosemary Dinnage

Boggle Box

The Box in the Corner: Television and the Under-Fives by GWEN DUNN *Macmillan* £7.95 and £2.95

Gwen Dunn spent several months sitting in with a group of 50 East Anglian pre-school children while they watched television at home. She distributed to parents, playgroup leaders and student teachers questionnaires on children's reactions to TV and got back, amazingly, 791 completed ones. Other forms were circulated to schools and again no less than 415 sent in their comments, on 2,890 first-year children. Another 50 schools were asked for teachers' own views on the subject; and the author also talked to television producers, advisers and writers.

A great many people were evidently put to a good deal of trouble, and large amounts of data were collected. Formal analysis of such material – charts, tables, percentages, conclusions – can be very dull and sometimes unenlightening, but the method Mrs Dunn adopts of a leisurely and inconclusive amble round the subject is worse. Television, it seems, can be quite a good thing for young children but then, on the other hand, sometimes it isn't. She does make some specific points and suggestions but no more, really, than might have been put forward on the basis of a few chats with parents and teachers and of her own common sense as head teacher.

One of the main points made is that children of this age understand less than even the planners of pre-school programmes realise; their preoccupations are determined by a logic we have forgotten about, and she quotes a child she took to see *Coppélia* – 'On the way we see some sheep. I see them sheep Saturday and I tell the others. The ballet was nice and we see them sheep again on the way home.'

She recommends in particular therefore that the programmes for pre-school children go at a slower pace, with easier vocabulary, sometimes even leaving static pictures for discussion and for staring at. She would like – it goes without saying – to see parents watching with the children and interpreting for them, and suggests that propaganda to this effect be written into adult programmes such as soap operas.

The views of her sample of teachers were, predictably again, neither quite for nor quite against television for the under-fives: while the box can, or should, do something to remedy the dullness of homes where talk and ideas are lacking, it just as often produces passive, bleary infants. It teaches them to ignore the human voice, said several; and an inspector of schools recalled seeing some under-fives switching, during a temporary breakdown, from the telly to the clothes rotating in the washing-machine, and just as easily back to the telly when it was mended.

It is the more deprived child in fact who emerges as the one to gain least from watching television: to understand the least, and to be most likely to be left watching uncomprehendingly all evening. The truth is that Mrs Dunn cannot really grapple with the subject of pre-school children and television without facing the fact, as she only occasionally does, that most of what they see is probably not from the gentle world of *Play School* and *Watch with Mother* but from adult programmes. The *News* is of course one of the most frightening of programmes. One simple fact that might have been established through her questionnaire is what proportion of pre-school children's viewing is actually of the programmes designed for them.

I happen to have been re-reading *Akenfield* at the same time as *The Box in the Corner*. In 1934 a child, not much older than Mrs Dunn's subjects, would cycle back from school, take a sack to the farm to collect pigs' insides, carry them home, scrape and wash them for sausage skins, and take the waste out in buckets and bury it. Horrific; but also purposeful, skilled, and indubitably a part of the family's real day-to-day life, as Mrs Dunn and others are anxious that television should be. That generation, comments another character in *Akenfield*, has the gift of noticing – whether the beans are a bit higher on the stalk this year than last, for instance – while the young ones see nothing: 'nobody is trying to bring it out in them.' It is Mrs Dunn's hope, and that of all right-thinking people, that that is what television might do. Preserve us from cynicism, and let us hope they are right.

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DENT

John Coleman

Goggle Books

The hardest task facing parents still old-fashioned enough to believe in the pleasures and virtues of reading is to prise Jenny and Johnny away from the telly: print out, pictures in. Publishers are increasingly alert to this, as witness such juvenile tie-ins as the Magpie packs (Cape 99p), mini-Jackdaws issued in association with Thames TV – posters, fact sheets and ideas for things to make and do. Most of their contents can be pinned on a domestic or school wall-board (you need to be able to turn them over, since there is often info on the back). *Camping*, *Space*, *The Airport* and *Conservation* indicate a net thrown cannily wide. The last of these is nicely in line with both the new visual manoeuvring and the new environmental morality. Via enticing fold-outs, it shows as it teaches as it warns

If that sounds heavy, let me assure you it is not. The best of the eye-catchers, or goggle-books, these days are very good indeed. A magnificent example is Michael Chinery's *The Family Naturalist* (Macdonald & Jane's £6.95) which covers aquatic life, birds, mammals, insects and other crawlies, trees, herbaceous plants, rocks and fossils. It is superbly and copiously illustrated, packed with high-class non-fiction that was not only unknown to me but understandable, and – among a 100 or so projects and experiments – capable of telling you how to dissect a coughed-up owl pellet, how to make a wormery, grow ferns in a bottle garden, take 'photographs' without a camera, construct artificial nests and beachcomb like a professional. *The Children's Book of the Countryside* (Usborne £2.50) would be an admirable supplement as it traverses more limited ground – birds, trees and wild flowers – and is aimed at a younger audience (*vide* a tiresome little cartoon-strip adviser who jars condescendingly with the surrounding drawings, all in colour), but goes into more detail on the identification of leaves and our feathered friends.

Usborne have burst into publishing f

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kids in a big way with about a dozen series, 'Young Scientist', 'Time Traveller' and 'World of the Unknown' among them (all at £1.95 and 95p). I enjoyed *Ghosts*, which scampers attractively from afrits through fakes down to the White Lady of Dering, appropriately a library-haunter. To begin, though, at the beginning, there is their *Children's Encyclopedia of Prehistoric Life* (£2.50 – and firm value for money), going from the birth of Earth to Stone Age man and incorporating my favourite aids to a failing memory: time-charts. Did you know that *Compsognathus*, the smallest dinosaur, was about the size of a crow? Hands up. Audrey Vincente Dean's *Make a Prehistoric Monster* (Faber £3.95 and £2.25) gives plausible instructions to small hands down and ready to construct 'A Rhamphorhynchus for a Questionable Room Decoration' – it is repulsive – or 'A Glittering Glyptodon to Take for Walks'. Surprise the neighbours. Talking of dinosaurs and getting your pennyworth, I must tuck in the pocket-sized, 32-page Scatterboxes (Scimitar 40p each), which have done those beasts already and now come up with *Knights*, *Record Breakers: Air*, *Deadly Creatures* and *Fossil Hunting*: terrific for flicking through on the loo.

Patricia Lockie's *Earth* (Sidgwick & Jackson £3.50), 'our planet in full colour with a children's atlas', is a flat book, only 80 pages, with large ambitions, most of them fulfilled: a remarkable feat of intelligent compression. Amazing that – in the age of the photograph – it is the cunning cross-section drawings and diagrams that win out every time. This is particularly true of the Macdonald Countries series, now numbering 21 with the additions of *Israel*, *Australia* and *Brazil*. At £2.25 apiece, they keep up a pretty high standard: authoritative impressionism plus a final, reined-in section comprising reference pages on geography and government, on history and the arts, and on the economy, plus a gazetteer and political and physical maps. Mothers will relish the cool put-down of Brazilian machismo: 'this can lead to much self-conscious posturing . . .' But the overload of photos does less work (who *needs* bodies in a classroom? feeders in a caff?) than the well-judged sketches, which can usefully simplify and systematise, put black lines round the quotidian fuzz of life, make key-connections to be later used for entry into reluctant realities. Philip Hewitt's *Looking at Russia* (Black £1.95) has a keen, down-to-earth text, disentangling the complexities of its 15 republics; the colour snaps of buildings are fine; yet space is surely wasted by a black-and-white of a woman 'Making Pancakes'. I fear the same may apply to an ingenious 'Buildings as History' pair by Eleanor Allen: *Farms* and *Industry* (Black £1.75 each). The texts are full of surprises and sustain the series' title: what to make of 'this magnificently ornate yellow and red brick engine works' when it is transmitted in shades of grey?

Still on series, the 'See Inside' trio, *A Galleon*, *A Roman Town*, *A Castle*, edited by R. J. Unstead (Hutchinson £1.50), maintains a beautiful balance between copy and illustration. These may be adjuncts to history proper, but it would be a jaundiced eye that didn't feel the urge to roam through the cut-away walls of this fort, that elaborate ship. Macdonald's 'New Reference Library', for '9-to 13-year-olds', further bolsters my argument in favour of at least a mixture of the drawn and the photographed, with the stress strongly on the first, thanks to Christopher Pick's *Canals and Waterways* and Joanna Howard's *How a Town Works*. I am less enthralled by Jack Harvey's *History of Entertainment* (all these are at £1.50 each), which dashes through a rather large order at breakwind speed. But then I chucked across the room a Collins opus that had Shakespeare as a star of the 15th century. Mr Harvey's two pages on pop music find room for the Beatles' jackets: 'no lapels'. Better by far, Barry Dufour's *The World of Pop and Rock* (Macdonald £2.50), which packs a decent deal of hard-core material within a glam lay-out: even punk gets its quick, slamming words. Musically and humanly tops for ignorant slobs like me is John Amis's *The Facts about a Symphony Orchestra* (G. Whizzard/André Deutsch £2.25). He sort of chats around the LSO, its trials and triumphs; amiably sorts out conductors' idiosyncrasies; shows you where musicians sit, what instruments they play, how, and how importantly. A pity someone let André Previn introduce it as 'instantly comprehensive' to a child. Only those who go to comprehensible schools, Mr P.

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Screwdrivers

It may be nothing better than a residual 19th-century faith in the intrinsic tidiness of the universe that keeps one wondering what the ultimate purpose of fictional writing can be. No doubt, it's merely mad to suppose that it can have *a* purpose – our fictions are not designed as psychic screwdrivers to adjust exactly this or that bit of the emotional life. But the urge persists to find some general account of why we should mind as much as we do mind about some books and not others, some general justification of our belief that a failure to make an impact sometimes reflects the weaknesses of the book, sometimes the weaknesses of the reader. The urge is so much the stronger in the case of children's fiction, at worst because we are so used to doing things to children for their own future welfare, and at best because it raises in more acute form the whole litany of questions about the demands an author can make on his or her readers, and about the tension between didactic aims and mere entertainment.

Peter Carter's *Under Goliath* (Oxford £2.95) seems to me a strikingly successful piece of arm's-length moral instruction. Its setting is Belfast, the 'Goliath' of the title is the massive transporter crane in the Harland and Wolf yard, and its time is the very beginning of the present troubles. The narrator – and he's not much of a hero – is Alan Kenton, a military bandsman now, but a 14-year-old then; his memory is awakened by the coincidence of being somewhere in the Gulf when a red-haired soldier is killed. The red-haired soldier was, briefly, his friend when they were both kids, before his father's IRA allegiances pulled him one way, while the Kentons' half-hearted Protestant loyalties pulled them the other. The cast is familiar – an uncle who's a B Special and a foul-mouthed bigot, a brother whose hopes lie with working-class solidarity and who eventually emigrates to Australia, Mackracken and MacPhee who run the local walking band, which is by turns exciting and sickening in its swaggering insistence on Protestant supremacy. Nobody is preternaturally good or bad, clever or stupid; the way bigotry can erupt in an apparently quiet and friendly street and the terrifying impact of adult violence on a child are all brought out deftly and unforcedly. And, if it all ends with the narrator's gloomy reflection that Belfast is beyond hope, that's hardly teaching children to despair too quickly.

Eleanor Spence's *A Candle for St Antony* (Oxford £2.95) tackles what is perhaps a more difficult subject rather less successfully. Set half in Sydney and half in Vienna, it's the story of a short-lived, intense adolescent friendship between Justin, an all-Australian middle-class ocker, and Rudi, the son of an Austrian immigrant music teacher, now dead, and his tiny, cultured widow who nourishes thoughts of Vienna on *apfelstrudel* and coffee. The friendship is more or less destroyed by the jeers of their comrades, who, being healthy Australians, are on the watch for incipient homosexuality wherever it may rear its head. The trouble is that most of the youths who appear on the scene are so repulsive, so obtuse and so shallow that the emotional centre of the story is hardly able to hold its own against the feeling that it would have been a good thing if Van Diemen and his successors had failed to discover Australia in the first place. *Instead of a Dad* by Kerstin Thorvall (Kestrel Books £2.95) is aimed at slightly younger readers, and will teach them a bit about the causes of gloominess in Sweden – unmarried Mum takes in Leffe, the paroled bank robber who's rational and good-natured so long as he keeps off the booze. He doesn't, and the welfare state has no way of keeping him out of jail; Magnus loses his substitute dad, and Mum is now 231 Larsson's woman.

Oddly enough, old-fashioned adventures seem to be losing out to realism of this kind on the one hand, and a blossoming of science fiction and Tolkienery for 12-year-olds on the other. *The Outcasts* by Tom Ingram (Hutchinson £3.25) is minimally mythic, though set in some unlocatable primitive past and telling the story of a trio of scapegoats, expelled from a village of shepherds to try to discover why a plague of eagles is killing their flocks. The eagles turn out to be controlled by a curious character whose motives seem more bound up with a love of tidiness than any particular taste for evil, but the story moves at a brisk enough pace to disguise any shortcomings. Tanith Lee's *East of Midnight* (Macmillan £3.50) is a junior version of the rather sexy science fictions she does for adults. There's a good deal of messing about in time vortices and such, but the story of a world in which a feminist theocracy demands the quinquennial sacrifice of the queen's male consort is good fun and well told.

Susan Cooper's *Silver on the Tree* (Chatt £3.95) is another matter altogether. This is the last of a five-volume series, *The Dark is Rising*, and it ends in a splendid pitched battle between the forces of Light and the forces of Dark. It's so well done that one does begin to wonder if there is any difference between Tolkien for 12-year-olds and Tolkien for adults. Susan Cooper has the essential knack for this sort of thing, that of conjuring up lost cities, hideous animals and sensations of something-not-quite-right with a cinematic vividness. She also has that nice sense of the plangent which distinguishes both *The Lord of the Rings* and the Wagnerian Ring cycle – when Dark and Light have fought their final battle, the creatures of myth depart, and human history can begin in a world which is both humanised and disenchanted.

But for something mind-clinging, and mind-chilling, Robert Cormier's *I am the Cheese* (Gollancz £3.20) takes the prize. It's in no sense a children's book, although the narrator is in his mid-teens. The plot is one of those it would be wicked to give away, but the story of the boy's bicycle ride to see his injured father, paralleled by an inner journey to discover his true identity, is handled with immense skill. There is nothing

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in the novel which can't be taken two ways at least, and whether the central figure is indeed the victim of the US government or merely of his own schizophrenia, none of the ways is anything but miserably uncomfortable.

Jeremy Treglown

Shin-Pads

Our children have been going on about what presents they'll get for Christmas since, well, last Boxing Day at least, so when this snowdrift of review copies arrived, the first shovelful we brought in for them was the Christmas batch. Raymond Briggs's *Father Christmas*, with its stout-swilling Santa living in a back-to-back with an outside lavatory, has always seemed to strike a familiar chord at home, and the sequel, *Father Christmas Goes on Holiday*, is already compulsory reading in the 6.30 a.m. slot. The old man tries France (he gets dysentery), Scotland (it rains), and ends up in a super-Butlin's, the Nero's Palace Hotel in Las Vegas. It's a long, very funny cartoon strip, even at 6.30 a.m., and, because it's a Puffin paperback, very cheap at 60p.

There's not much in that price-range, though the cost of children's hardbacks is compensated for partly by the general quality of the illustrations and partly by durability. Nobody here has ripped up *Bertie's Escapade* yet, a reprint of the 1949 Kenneth Grahame/Ernest H. Shepard Christmas story (Methuen £1.95). Bertie is 'a pig of action', A. A. Milne's Piglet after a toughening-up spell at boarding school, and the dialogue has some crisp moments – notably when Benjie the rabbit complains 'Hang it all, I'm not going to fag up that hill tonight for anyone!' and Bertie replies 'Then I'll bite you. Choose which you please.' It's a dated piece, with its talk of bathing machines at Broadstairs and a champagne toast to the King, but anyone who remembers squatting on the dusty floor of a post-war state primary school and thrilling to the line 'God bless Nanny and make her good' will agree that children aren't necessarily put off by the snobbish and the antiquated.

Nor, for that matter, by the familiar. There are plenty of old favourites in the bookshops, including a new version of *The Owl and the Pussy-Cat* well illustrated by Gwen Fulton (Cape £2.50), and another of *The Three Little Pigs*, now available in the 3-D 'Peepshow Series' published by Chatto. This one takes the pop-up proscenium treatment very well with its different settings – the parental pigsty, the doomed houses of straw and sticks, the exterior of the brick house and, finally, its interior, focused on the hearth and the water-pot brimming over with boiled wolf. Good value at £1.50, and it's the non-nightmare version in which all the pigs escape.

Favourite authors are as much in evidence as favourite stories. There's a lively new Laurent de Brunhoff, *Babar and the Wully-Wully* (Methuen £2.45), in which Flora wins back her new pet from the rhinoceroses by taming the villainous Rataxes; and a rather disappointing John Burningham, *Come Away From the Water, Shirley* (Cape £2.50), cheerfully drawn but dependent on a silent contrast between the verbal narrative – Shirley having a dull time on the beach with her parents – and a visual one – her imagined adventures: too sophisticated a device for the rewards it brings, if the lack of interest shown by our usually pro-Burningham children is any guide. They were pleased, though, with a new story from John Cunliffe and Joan Hickson, *Farmer Barnes and the Harvest Doll* (Deutsch £2.75). And parents less defeatist than us will grab for two ambitious new titles in the Dick Bruna series, *I Can Dress Myself* and *I Can Read Difficult Words*, both published by Methuen at £1. As usual, there are plenty of educational books around, but my two-year-old daughter's favourite is more gymnastic than intellectual. Gerald Rose's *'Ahhh!' Said Stork* (Faber £2.50) is an inflammatory story in which jungle animals try to crack an alligator-egg: 'Hippopotamus rolled on it . . . Chimp hit it. Elephant stamped on it . . . Zebra kicked it' and so on. It never fails: the reader should wear a stout jerkin and shin-pads.

Frank Muir's first children's book, *What-a-Mess* (Benn £1.95), is similarly amusingly illustrated by Joseph Wright, but not as funny as David McKee's *Two Admirals* (Andersen/Hutchinson £2.75), an anarchically painted story about a village which manages to subdue two boring and noisy retired admirals living there, only in time to face the arrival of two even more noisy and boring retired generals. And although it's more common to find good illustrations than good narrative in books for young children, the field is so big that there are plenty which have both. Peggy Blakeley's shepherd's-eye view of the birth of Jesus is exceptionally well served by Bunshu Iguchi's charcoal and watercolour washes in *The Little Shepherd Boy* (Black £2.50). Margaret Neve's *More and Better* (Macmillan £2.95) is about a witch's potion that makes frogs, cows, etc., very much bigger until another potion restores them to normal size but better condition. It's set in poor Welsh farmland – hence the plot – and vividly painted in a style of primitive pointillism.

There are good pictures by Danièle Bour, too, for *The Joyful Ghost* (Longbow/W. H. Allen, £2.95), a group of snooty stories by the Duchess of Bedford about a pair of children called Galaad and Sérafine, whose invisible friend – the ghost of the title – enables them to play tricks on Miss Flatbottom, their governess, and to make the old gardener fall into a clump of nettles. What larks! Meanwhile, a more recognisable family called the Jacksons have come on the scene in an excellent new series by Ulises Wensell, published by Evans Books at £1.95 a volume. The stories are based on a safe formula – two parents, helpful grandparents and a nice house (there *are* children's books in which some of these elements are missing, but not many) – but they are lively, well-illustrated and refreshingly truthful about domestic friction and chaos: a very welcome, long-overdue alternative to the insipid *Topsy and Tim*.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Benedict Nightingale

Rue with a Difference

Ophelia *Oxford Playhouse*
Laburnum Grove *Duke of York's*
The Caretaker *Greenwich*
Suicide in B-flat *Open Space*
I Love my Wife *Prince of Wales*

Shakespeare's Ophelia is generally agreed to have gone mad because her difficult boyfriend killed her importunate father. C. P. Taylor has different ideas. She withdraws into her private ecology – musing of trees and flowers, if not precisely of fennel and rue – because the two of them are in cahoots with Claudius and his ruthless general, Laertes. Hamlet, it is true, has had his adolescent doubts. He can't quite see why tenant farmers are being thrown off their land and left to starve. Nor does he like it when the king's sheriff in distant Aulbourg is murdered by an agent provocateur and a punitive expedition is sent to massacre the citizenry. But in the end he accepts that such things are regrettable political necessities. If Denmark's a prison, it is because there's no realistic alternative. Dreamy Ophelia, who has all along resisted this glum wisdom, promptly pulls down the shutters on her mind; and the ghost of Hamlet's father potters back to hell, well-satisfied with his outing. He has wanted only to reconcile his son and his brother and, now that's achieved, he can sizzle away in peace.

There are many imaginative touches and much gripping circumstance and some nice performances, especially from Jane Asher and Joseph Blatchley, a touching pair of political babes, struggling to stay upright in the swirling shallows of Elsinore; and yet I'm not at all convinced that Mr Taylor has made a particularly original contribution to the growing *Hamlet* archives. His forte has long been a benign if sly cast of satire, usually directed at people with a higher conceit of their radicalism than their actual impulses and abilities have justified. *Allergy*, *Black and White Minstrels* and *Bread and Butter* could have been written by no one else. Now, *Ophelia* also has to do with 'the conflict between the real and the ideal', as Taylor himself puts it. But this time the glint in his eye has dimmed, the sides of his mouth have been firmly folded down, and we end up with something that, in most essential respects, could have been earnestly patched together by any of a dozen contemporary dramatists: the play about the establishment's tendency to pass off wish and will as inexorable natural law, about its power to crush the young and absorb the would-be rebel. It seems a rather redundant message, wherever it's put across. To proclaim it in Oxford, of all gristmills, is to labour the incontrovertible, a case of pleonasm run amok.

The terminal insult flung at Ibsen by that most notorious of critics, Clement Scott, was 'suburban'; and the word has, if anything, slumped still lower in the cultural stock-market since their time. Suburbia is dead and deadening, a concrete-hued corpse liable to infect those who touch it with mental paralysis. That, at any rate, was the myth in 1933, when *Laburnum Grove* was written. That is the myth now, and, like all myths, it needed and needs to be challenged: at which point Jolly Jack Priestley trundles into the outer-London graveyard, massive nostrils flaring anew. What, he asks, is actually going on in those prim semis on Acacia Avenue, what's lurking in the greenhouses behind Hillcrest, Drive? Couldn't that shadow on the muslin curtains belong to a saint or a master-criminal? And this, as it turns out, is very much the snook his play cocks at those uppity metropolitans in the stalls. George Radfern, patronised by his family as a 'nice, honest, sleepy old thing', is a highly accomplished forger, clever enough to outwit Scotland Yard whenever the clump of its boots gets disconcertingly close.

The problem is sustaining the joke for an evening, and it is one Mr Priestley never quite solved. There is much coming and going, much hushed discussion beside the French windows, and much comparing of George with his boastful, sleazy brother-in-law, as with the used-car salesman who wants to marry his daughter. He has, it is suggested, more courage than these condescending spongers, and perhaps even more social responsibility, since his efforts are calculated to do nothing worse than marginally reflate the sluggish British economy, while they want only to wangle his loot into shoddy if legal enterprises of their own. Better a good crook than a bad entrepreneur. Even so, the play tends to dawdle and, more for that reason than any other, to date. It lacks the speed and succinctness which a less impatient age than our own was presumably prepared to forego. A more consistently expert production might help, though there's one performance we would wish no different, and that, by good fortune, the main one. There has always been a troll somewhere beneath the podgy bank-manager that Arthur Lowe has planted in the public mind. A flash of the glasses, a twist of the lips, and out it pops, like something from the Brothers Grimm. I don't think there's another actor who can so perfectly temper bourgeois respectability with the threat of anarchy; and that makes him a most appropriate George.

The Greenwich *Caretaker* is a long, drab affair, thanks mainly to the monotony of Max Wall, rumbling and shuffling through the part of Pinter's tramp, and never deviating from the pose of morose dignity he strikes at the start. Malice, bitterness, petty conceit, shiftiness, and much else seem outside his range. *Suicide* is the new Sam Shepard, who once again dips his fingers in the American bran-tub, this time pulling out a musician dedicated to killing aspects of his own identity: two spoof cops are there to cope with this strange slaughter. All is wild metaphor, linguistic fizz, needing a tougher (or perhaps more transatlantic) mind than mine to unravel. It is certainly a world of disreputable imagination and talent away from our other import, a musical about putative orgiasts whose instinct for monogamy conquers all. *I Love My Wife*, it piously proclaims, as if we cared. One thing, though. Its authors have come up with a novel contribution to the theatre's save-it campaign by making the hero a furniture remover and most of the supporting cast his assistants. They can thus act *and* shift scenery, clearly an idea worth developing. Given our directors' mania for Shakespeare in modern dress, why not put Henry V in a cloth cap and pack his invading army into a Pickford's van? 'Once more into the breach, dear friends,' he could cry, as they stumbled into Harfleur bearing podia, arches and coloured backcloths. Richard II's cri-de-coeur on his abdication, 'conveyors are you all', might also take on a new meaning, shouted out as sofas and chaises-longues whisked past in preparation for the next scene. The possibilities are infinite.

Journalism

Brian Glanville

Somewhat Dodgy

The Man They Couldn't Gag by PETER WILSON *Hutchinson/Stanley Paul* £5.95

There is an element of pathos about Pete Wilson's 'autobiography' and an element o mystery. The pathos is that of a man wh seems to have lived his life so unremittingl in public that the private self has quit disappeared. The book is in no true sens an autobiography at all, merely a showing protracted to infinite tedium, of the publi face in the public place, a warmed-u second serving of infinite, ill-written sport columns, shapeless and self-indulgent. Th vulgarity of the title – the sobriquet Wilso was given by the *Sunday Pictorial* – is suff ciently indicative. Wilson is an 'othe directed' man, his eyes closed, his ears shu his mind made up. The mystery is that h should have been taken so seriously in Fle Street, and that the jacket should bear s fulsome a eulogy from the able Christophe Brasher – 'one of the very great spor journalists of the century'.

Contemplating this mystery we may fir a few clues to the state of sports writir in this country. Twelve years ago I wro a piece in *Encounter* called 'Looking f

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an Idiom', in which I tried to examine and explain the differences between American and English sports journalism. American sports journalism seemed to me much the better, because it had found an embracing idiom, where the English kind was polarised between the popular and the mandarin. The popular genus was severely stylised. The mandarin variety failed, even at its best, because it was dealing with sports of mass appeal for a small, limited readership. Thus, there had been no British Ring Lardner, John Lardner, Damon Runyon, Red Smith.

My stalking horses in popular journalism were Peter Wilson and Desmond Hackett. Of these, Wilson had much the longer career, and much the greater authority. It is a particular irony that he, who made his name on the *Sunday Pictorial* and reached his apogee on the *Daily Mirror*, should be an Old Harrovian, son of a man who captained Cambridge University at cricket. He began with *The Times*, who treated him meanly, yet his style, his outlook and his personality were clearly best suited to the popular press. By intriguing contrast, several of the finest sports writers for 'quality' papers have sprung from the working classes: Neville Cardus, Don Davies, John Arlott, Hugh McIlvanney. In their case one has the impression that education, hard won, is not something to be thrown away on what I called the shoddy inexactitudes, the weary stylisation, of popular sports journalism.

It cannot be said that Wilson degenerated into such habits. An excellent tennis player, a connoisseur of boxing, his first concern nevertheless was the projection of self. His *Sunday Pictorial* column, started in 1938, was redolent from the outset of the first-person singular, one-sentence paragraphs and unfulfilled promises of exposure. Forty years later, in the pages of this book, written in retirement in Majorca, his writing seems no better and no worse.

> In January I was in St Moritz for the winter sports. I must say my stay started with a distinct giggle. After a somewhat dodgy flight I reached the bar of, I think, the Palace Hotel and had a brandy to settle my nerves . . .

And apart from several good anecdotes – Hemingway charging down his own front door in New York, then kicking in the locked cocktail cabinet, the Duke of Windsor testifying to Hitler's honesty a month before the outbreak of the second world war – a kind of *groupthink* rules, vague and sentimental.

> I am not going into great detail about the man [Hugh Cudlipp] who affected my career – and therefore, to a large degree, my life – except to say without reservation that he was easily the most brilliant journalist with whom I ever worked, or even met, and that when his responsibilities were purely editorial he threw off journalistic ideas like a Roman candle discharges sparks.

Improvement in popular sports journalsm, I wrote in 1965, depended on a vanishng of the gap between the popular and he 'quality' newspaper, itself dependent ıpon social change. Since no such change ıas taken place, it is hardly surprising that he polarity remains. The fact that an NUJ ule now forces all prospective journalists out into the sticks for three years, thus cutting down the supply of graduates, the fact that Fleet Street still tends to recruit its sports journalists from working-class boys who leave school young and go straight on to the local paper, is of secondary importance. The salient fact is that the sports pages of the popular press are still woefully old-fashioned, that the numerous talented sports journalists on popular papers in Fleet Street might as well check in their perceptions, their originality and their seriousness at the front desk for all the use they'll be allowed to make of them.

Whether there can be such a thing as Mr Brasher's 'very great sports journalist', any more than there can be a very great stockbroker, must be open to question. Sportwriting, given the nature of its subject matter, can descend very quickly into bathos. It is no chance that the best American writers have tended to use it as a trampoline. Yet there can, surely, be *very good* sports writers, plying their trade in the mass circulation newspapers, satisfying a public which, thanks partly to television, is a good deal less easily satisfied than it was in the past. Peter Wilson's book may have some value if it be seen as a relic; and a warning.

Films

John Coleman

Hustle

Black Joy (X) *Plaza 2*
England Made Me (AA) *Minema*
Voyage of the Damned (AA) *ABC 2, Shaftesbury Avenue*
The Chicago Maternity Centre Story and Birth *Other Cinema, until 6 November*

After a bleak debut with *Four in the Morning* (1965), Anthony Simmons waited eight years before converting a children's story he had written into film: *The Optimists of Nine Elms*. This had several merits – a marvellously rounded performance by Peter Sellers as an irascible old busker, two well-found Cockney kids, a sharp-tongued script – but perhaps its greatest attraction was its cunning devotion to a sort of alternative London. This interest, unusual in our domestic film-makers, in pockets and byways of the sprawling metropolis, is headily carried over into *Black Joy*, where Brixton sees most of the action. The title correctly describes the movie: the settings may be authentic and the faces right (a bullyboy Rastafarian in a labour exchange, a white butcher inviting the hero to piss off); yet Simmons – rather as in *The Optimists* – proves to be more a fantasist, a skimming entertainer keeping down the sentimentality always round the corner with an acid drop of dialogue or situation. Here, the stream of West Indian songs also serves. And the screenplay, by Simmons and Jamal Ali (on whose play *Dark Days and Dark Nights* it was based), has enough salty language to have bought that 'X'. At the press show, anxious liberal voices were to be heard, wondering if this mostly merry occasion mightn't provide fodder for Enoch and the NF. If it does, he and they are even bigger bigots and fools than I take them to be. This is *not* a documentary; its blacks do, alas, have rhythm (as does the event, where rhythm – you might say – practically replaces plot); their major interests appear to be copulation and not working. It is very great fun.

After indignities with the immigration people, a bemused and innocent 'country boy' from Guyana, Ben (the handsome Trevor Thomas), lands up in Brixton: he is a brown Candide, speedily robbed by a tiny street arab, Devon (amazing nine-year-old Paul Medford), then taken over with colossal impudence by swinging Dave (Norman Beaton of *The Fosters*), layabout extraordinary and boyfriend of little Devon's ma, Miriam (Floella Benjamin). Ben gets a job as dustman, hankers wordlessly after Miriam's younger, street-hardened sister, Saffra (Dawn Hope), is conned rotten by fast-talking Dave, becoming breadwinner, cook, decorator and general doormat: black is dutiful? Of course, his silences are not always to be taken as consent and the end discovers tables turned, Ben at the wheel of a shiny new Buick he can't drive, Devon beside him, and a black beauty climbing in the back. Jerkily, the car moves down the road into cloud-cuckoo land.

Along the way, there is all manner of speedy impressionism, incidents going from farce through the wry to what ought to be tragedy (but, as Dave says somewhere, 'My smile is my hustle', and even an abortion is treated as a fact of life rather than death). A white girl finally deflowers virgin Ben – hark to those NF hackles rising: 'You're very pretty,' she rightly says. He: 'I'm engaged.' She: 'Good. I'm married.' Elsewhere, Ben buys Saffra a dress and proudly shows it to Devon: 'She ain't going to wear this rubbish,' snaps the unsparing kid. There are side-trips to a sex shop, the seaside, a night club, all caught from the raw, fresh and not quite expected angle. It would be very silly if whiteys like you and me left this beautifully acted enterprise to black audiences: it ought to be for all of us British and there is, however glancingly treated, soul-food for thought.

The Minema is to be congratulated on its recuperation of Peter Duffell's screen adaptation, with Desmond Cory as co-writer, of Graham Greene's 1935 novel, *England Made Me*. Done with great craft and economy, transplanted from the Sweden of the book to Germany in the mid-Thirties and shot mainly in Yugoslavia, this passed through London in 1973 with the undigested celerity of a swallowed bead. It is better than that. Duffell has a rare way with actors. Michael York plays Tony, the charming chancer with the fake Old-Etonian tie and both a public school vocabulary and weird code of honour. 'You're a stunner, Kate,' he addresses his twin sister (Hildegard Neil), now mistress and right-hand woman to the apolitical, hugely rich industrialist Krogh (Peter Finch). Minty, the quintessential seedy Greenelander, an expatriate journalist who genuinely went to Eton, keeps a spider under a tooth-glass and wears his shabby mac

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like a shroud, is there for ever in Michael Hordern's mumbly, shambling-faced interpretation. Hitler screams from street loudspeakers, storm-troopers strut. But finally Tony can take no more when a Jew is hideously maltreated; and Tony has to be disposed of. A floating Gold Flake packet here is one of a hundred sensitive touches. Adverse criticism might come in that a certain anaemia pervades; one is generally held at a distance; at worst, the film is a stunning series of illustrations. Do see it, though.

Rapidly: *Voyage of the Damned*, founded on a true and awful bit of history, beginning on 11 May 1939 in Hamburg harbour, with a liner carrying 937 German Jews to asylum in Havana, is doomed from the start: the roll-call of stars. Any long film that carries as many is already overweight – and that's an axiom. Janet Suzman, having been credited, is mysteriously not present at all and some brutal cutting has clearly gone on. At 145 minutes, this predictable simplification of something serious is still stretched. Stuart Rosenberg steered. The Other Cinema's double bill, a couple of hour-long documentaries relating to child-birth, is thoroughly rewarding. My own preference is for the Chicago-centred one, which pitches into the profiteering medical suppliers who have effectively clamped down on women choosing to have their babies at home. The New Zealand *Birth* has much to show but why it had the tedious, actorish R. D. Laing to comment on camera defeats me: there is no womb for him in such an active feminine occasion.

Magazines

David Caute

Coining It

The *Authors Guild Bulletin* arrives from New York four times a year. Seizing it, I lock myself away, disconnect the telephone, and devour its contents from cover to cover. It's a noisy session: fleeting moments of hope, of wild greed, followed by envy and despair, generate shrieks, snarls and a final, sustained sobbing. The presiding message never varies: America is where the money is and I'm not getting any.

But that is not the end of it. Before each issue is lovingly filed away I sift through it several times more, whisky in hand, while trying to coax my small daughter to sleep. As her snores deepen and the glass is refilled, the golden statistics once again foster euphoric visions. Did you know that 10.3 per cent of books published in America get advance payments of over $40,000? Mind you, that's peanuts. The *Authors Guild Bulletin* is very helpful in describing how the really big boys make it; and late in the evening, on my third whisky, I can become a very big boy indeed.

Take one case: Entebbe Author Recounts Sleepless Bookwriting Stint. Recalls author William Stevenson: 'I signed no contract. Bantam and I had agreed on a shake of the hand that I would return with a clean manuscript in ten days.' So that's it! All these years I have been quibbling about meaningless small-print items in contracts instead of shaking publishers by the hand! And how did author Stevenson write a 216-page book in ten days, enabling 300,000 copies to roll off the presses in Chicago exactly 21 days after the Entebbe rescue?

> The Tel Aviv Hilton had an electric typewriter set up in my room which became overnight a nonstop command post. The traffic of specialists, stringers and translators forced the chambermaids to retire defeated. My bed, in which I never slept, was soon covered in sheets of raw material and plates of cold potato salad.

When Stevenson arrived back in New York he was met at Kennedy Airport by the editorial director of Bantam, who remarked: 'We're two minutes ahead of schedule.' Stevenson was rushed to the 17th floor of the Berkshire Hotel, where more batteries of secretaries and typewriters (and perhaps plates of cold potato salad) were waiting. The manuscript vanished into the photostat machine. 'We'll wake you up when we've read it,' they told him. While Stevenson slept for an incredible four hours, Paddy Chayefsky came up and began writing the screenplay.

Oh well, some of us have deep things to say, and deep things cannot be said in a hurry. Mind you, the *Authors Guild Bulletin* does carry its fair share of consolation items, by which I mean reports of other writers' miseries. Take the case of the author who wrote to his New York publisher politely inquiring why he had never received a royalty statement. The publisher replied:

> The computer figures were not comprehensible to me. They indicate that 106 were distributed and 7,439 were returned. There is obviously quite a discrepancy there. When the book does earn back the advance, however, rest assured . . .

Whatever illusions of wealth and potato salad and being met at Kennedy Airport by the editorial director of Bantam I still cherished were finally dispersed when I opened the *Authors Guild Bulletin* and learned the heartbreaking truth about Mecca itself – the American Best-Seller List. With the coldest sadism, the *Bulletin*'s editor decided to reprint an exposure by David Shaw, originally published in the *Los Angeles Times*. 'Being on the best-seller list is the best free publicity in the world for a book,' commented Irving Wallace, and he should know. Yes, adds Mr Shaw, being on a major best-seller list is almost as good for a book as being a best-seller. Wait a minute! What does the man mean? What he means, alas, is that writing a very good book that thousands of people want to read is only the most arduous and hazardous route to the top-ten charts and a gold-plated Cadillac. How, then, is it done?

The answer is pretty discouraging to a writer who rarely moves out of Hammersmith, W6. A shrewd author first discovers which are the book stores consulted by the newspapers for their weekly review, then he goes to the bank, and then he goes to those same book stores and starts buying copies of his own book. Apparently three or four copies at each store can do the trick if you're lucky – that would certainly take care of my publisher's advance – but not always. The late Billy Rose wrote a book that became number five on the best-seller list, although no one could fathom why. The truth emerged only when Rose died; more than 20,000 copies of his book were found in his home.

But worse. 'If he's nice to the booksellers in other ways,' writes Mr Shaw, 'he may do more than just make the list.' I'm not sure I quite understand – is this why American publishers won't take my books until they have seen a photograph? You'd think this squalid and filthy trade in bodies would give the girl writers an edge, but nowadays anything goes East and West. David Shaw does, however, provide one example of what being nice to booksellers can mean. He cites the case of a lady who achieved excellent results with a book called *Rich Friends*, and infers, wrongly I'm sure, that these results owed something to her technique of visiting booksellers with gifts of home-made pastries and peanut butter. I give up. But I shall continue to read the *Authors Guild Bulletin* while my daughter goes to sleep.

Music–1

Charles Fox

Third Stream

Anthony Braxton: 'New York, Fall 1974' 'Five Pieces 1975', 'Creative Orchestra Music 1976', 'Duets 1976' *Arista* £3.4 each; **'The Montreux/Berlin Concert'** *Arista* (2 LPs) £4.99

The evil that men do certainly keeps the names alive. Which is why people associa Chicago with Al Capone more readily tha with King Oliver, Frank Teschemacher Anthony Braxton. Yet Chicago was alwa much more than a setting for the St Vale tine's Day Massacre. Early in the centu it outranked most other American citi culturally, whether on a formal Europe level – the thriving Opera House, Ez Pound bullying *Poetry Chicago* into pu lishing *Prufrock* – or on the South Sic where boogie-woogie took shape, whe Louis Armstrong set the musical standar It was in Chicago, too, that white musicia first set out deliberately to play like bla ones.

Post-war decades have witnessed l flamboyance (an exception was Sun R blending of gritty jazz with astrology a black show-biz). Indeed, few outfits co boast a blander title than the 'Associat for the Advancement of Creative Mu ians', organised in the mid-1960s by couple of dozen black Chicagoans, includ the 21-year-old Anthony Braxton. At f they put the emphasis on the group rat

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than the individual. And where most other jazz avant-gardists went in for the fleshier sort of expressionism, the AACM concentrated on very precise sounds, using the ensemble as a prism rather than a bludgeon. A similar fastidiousness was being exhibited on this side of the Atlantic by musicians such as Derek Bailey, Willem Breuker and Albert Mangelsdorff. Other factors were involved too. When Johnny Dodds arrived in Chicago from New Orleans in 1920, his clarinet wrapped in newspaper, he was part of a narrow society, perpetuating a very specific idiom. For better or for worse, however, both those Europeans and the members of the AACM have been exposed to Webern and Cage as well as to Cecil Taylor and Ornette Coleman.

The Afro-American tradition surfaces regularly throughout these five LPs, notably in Braxton's alto saxophone playing, influenced by Paul Desmond as well as by Ornette and Eric Dolphy, and in the way the trombonist George Lewis sometimes growls like Joe Nanton or plays tailgate like Ory. Yet on other occasions Braxton hands out visual scores, expecting his musicians to build solos from pre-selected intervals or timbres. Not for nothing is one of the LPs called *Five Pieces.* Braxton makes use of post-Webern techniques rather as John Lewis imported baroque devices into the music he wrote for the Modern Jazz Quartet. Both men, incidentally, can be decidedly funky soloists, able to swing with the best. But they're also composers, never content just to let things happen.

Although Braxton's sprightliest and most emotional playing is on alto saxophone (he uses it as other composers resort to the piano), he is heard on a wide range of woodwinds. His fondness for the contrebass clarinet and saxophone results in a few *longueurs* but is part of a general obsession with deep, dark timbres. Most of the time he is a pitched-note man, preferring the clean-cut to the equivocal (it probably influenced his choice of the British-based trumpeter Kenny Wheeler to play in the earlier of his two quartets).

Discussion of Braxton usually omits any mention of individual pieces. That is because he prefers to identify compositions by diagrams and mathematical formulae rather than give them conventional titles. *Maple Leaf Rag* and Eric Dolphy's *Miss Ann*, both among the duets with the pianist Richard Abrams, are by way of being maverick selections. There are, incidentally, a couple of marches: one (from the Berlin concert) starts jokily, then expands into a stunning four-part improvisation. The other is on *Creative Orchestra Music*, and LP half full of essays in sonorities and spatial dallying, half full of pieces where riffs and vamp figures conjoin with big-band scoring.

Braxton fits at least a couple of jazz stereotypes: the saxophonist who typifies an entire tribe of soloists, the composer who first maps then explores an area previously inhabited by improvisers. Once it was bebop or modal jazz; now it happens to be 'free' jazz – the term is as inaccurate as it is unavoidable – that is coming into focus. Meanwhile, Braxton believes in moving from context to context as well as from country to country. He will use chord changes, a tone-row, even a Broadway ballad; solos can either unfold or fragment. Hard to pin down, a loner despite his accessibility, Braxton may end up embodying what jazz was all about in the 1970s.

Peter Porter

Poem Waiting to be Translated

I have tried to stop drinking
because it makes me sadder
and upsets my bladder,
but evenings come on
and doubtless something unnameable is done
in some unlighted place.

Why not remember the heroes
of hard situations,
those who answered inquisitors
in fresh parables,
whose lyrical rejoinders
are collected here
in memorial Penguins?

But not all are dead.
I met someone today
who said her years up to thirty
had been undoubtedly happy,
and I have seen with my own eyes
a dissident poet eating whitebait
and joking from the corner of his mouth.

O the lungs of poets
and their hump backs –
they are looking for the chalk
of apotheosis, tutorial rooms
of some exchange agreement
where the homesick specialist
says hello to a lime tree.

There the moon walks over
the Marches and murders
small lives by stagnant lakes,
fireflies sing round the ears
of fishermen setting out,
the landscape is stoic
and policed by malaria.

At this point in our history
everything is UnEnglish!
I say to the Japanese professor
who wants to know about Mateship:
we have reached a pluralism
of culture in our language
and I should like my wise instances
subsidised and printed
with generous margins.

After the funeral of the drunken poet
the busybody dogs disperse
on some business of their tails,
and the dead walk the land
casting no shadow.

Music–2

Mark Kidel

City Limits

Bob Seger *Odeon, Hammersmith*

It was one of those nights: London had been waiting for Bob Seger and the Silver Bullet Band for over five years, and the air was dense with a mass rock 'n' roll high. Advance reports, rumour and reputation promised a memorable gig, an incendiary distillation of the essence of rock, music to burn up all the pent-up energy and gnarled frustration of the city streets, but never without an eye on the good times instead of the more characteristic angry scowl of most hard-driving boogie.

When Seger walked on to the stage, he must have known that he had the whole of the Odeon with him: you could see the reflection of the audience's excitement sparkling in his eyes. The all-important rapport, the basic ingredient for a superlative performance, was established before a single note had been played. As the band launched into the irresistible stride of Ike and Tina Turner's *Nutbush City Limits*, it became instantly apparent that they would rise to the occasion. Very few rock concerts take off beyond the level of the competent, the production-line flash and boogie, played at ever-increasing volume. The limpness of the music is usually covered up by an elaborate show – costumes, back-drops or smoke bombs. From the very first bar of the concert to the uproarious finale of the third encore, Bob Seger produced a breathtakingly powerful and ungimmicky performance, highly polished, but always responsive to the exhilarating mood of the evening, and full of that gripping magic so rare in rock 'n' roll. Seger's music, rooted in Chuck Berry's very basic but infectiously danceable R & B and the solid power-packed chords of mid-Sixties soul, deals in what have become rock clichés, the same old riffs and rhythms that so many white bands have turned out over the last ten years, but he does it much more powerfully than most of his contemporaries.

Bob Seger has only recently emerged from neglected cult status. Until a few months ago, and the extensive radio coverage given to a couple of his singles, *Night*

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Moves and *Mainstreet*, he was hardly known outside his home town Detroit. In the Motor City itself, he was a favourite rock hero, towering above the other flashier local boys, Alice Cooper and Ted Nugent. Like many other American rock musicians, he had been reared on sounds from the ghetto, but mainly influenced by the more primitive raunch of the Stax and Atlantic house-styles rather than the rhythmic elegance and musical sophistication promoted by Detroit's own hit-factory, Tamla Motown. He has made ten LPs, but none have sold too well outside Michigan: one of the best, *Back in 72*, has been deleted on both sides of the Atlantic for several years, but unlike many other rockers who have grown weak at the knees with money and success, he has, in his relative obscurity, continued to produce first-class albums, mixing exuberant rock 'n' roll with more lyrical and reflective material.

The set Bob Seger performed at the Odeon last month had been carefully structured, with moods ranging from blazing highs to simmering lows. Each song possessed its own captivating drama, from the breathless mania of *Get Out of Denver* to the quiet and moving introspection of *Turn the Page*, a song about the loneliness of the long-travelling rock musician, which succeeded in focusing the listener's attention on the here and now, creating a unique closeness between Seger and his audience. His unstrained voice moved effortlessly from warm and mellow sweetness to a soul shout worthy of James Brown or Wilson Pickett. The Silver Bullet Band backed him superbly, playing in tight but unmechanical unison, constantly feeding off each other's inspiration.

As the concert drew to an end, Seger and his band could not help grinning at the magic they had created. When they thanked the audience for their ovation, the words and smiles were far from showbiz clockwork. It had been a very special gig, and everybody knew it. For once, the gulf that usually separates stage and auditorium had been completely bridged.

Music–3

Andrew Clements

Enigmatico

Philip Mead *Purcell Room*

In 'Musica Practica', his essay on the significance of Beethoven, Roland Barthes distinguishes between the music one listens to and the music one plays. A composer, he says, can seem minor when you listen to him, tremendous when you play him. The example he gives might be deliberately provocative – Schumann, surely a great composer by anybody's standards – but the classification could be useful for contemporary composers. At least George Crumb might then get the benefit of the doubt – for all I know he may be a tremendous composer to play. Certainly he attracts committed interpreters and, both in the US and increasingly in Britain, audiences; the recording of his Lorca-inspired *Ancient Voices of Children* was a smash hit by modern-music standards.

Of course one shouldn't criticise Crumb's music for not being what it doesn't set out to be. There's no point in expecting the intellectual rigour of an Elliott Carter (to choose the opposite pole of American music): Crumb is after your emotions, not your mind. Nothing wrong with that – one of the most often-heard criticisms of modern music is that it is too cerebral – but it's his methods that seem rather dubious. He has always courted his audiences in a cloak of literary mysticism, using highly evocative quotations from a variety of sources to provoke emotional reflexes quite foreign to the context of the music he puts them into. Crumb lets other artists' carefully wrought backgrounds do his spadework for him; the music can then carry the listener along from one frisson of recognition to the next. It may *seem* to be an intellectual form of appreciation but it's emotional exploitation of a subtly insidious kind. The listener is flattered into acceptance by the assumptions the music makes about the extent of his cultural background.

What prevents a simple rejection of Crumb's work as sophisticated kitsch is his craftmanship. He puts together his fragments with an unerring feeling for their exact effect and significance, matching them with instrumental sonorities that reveal an aural imagination unequalled among living composers. The range of sound he conjures from limited resources is extraordinary even if the music itself is commonplace, a concoction from the usual sources of mid-20th-century composition with perhaps a bias towards Messiaen and Varèse. It all makes a very convincing simulacrum of modernism.

This mixture sustains *Makrokosmos II* of 1973, subtitled 'Twelve Fantasy-pieces after the Zodiac for Amplified Piano', which Philip Mead introduced to Britain in his highly accomplished recital. The title immediately sets up resonances: of Bartok's six volumes of *Mikrokosmos* and of Schumann's *Fantasiestücke*. Crumb admits these and adds Debussy and Chopin to the pantheon. The 12 pieces are each assigned a sign of the zodiac as well as a characteristically pretentious title. Thus the fifth, Virgo, is 'Ghost-Nocturne: for the Druids of Stonehenge' and the seventh, Scorpio, is 'Tora! Tora! Tora! (Cadenza Apocalittica)'. The overall structure of *Makrokosmos II* falls into three parts. The first piece in each part requires the pianist to 'treat' the piano in some way to produce a timbre – strips of paper are laid on the strings, wine glasses are moved over them (an amazingly ghostly effect); the last piece in each is notated in the score in a symbolic way, generally some sort of circle. And of course there are the quotations. The pianist croons fragments of the Ordinary of the Mass and emits *Noh*-like yelps; the central section of Aries, 'A Prophecy of Nostradamus', has a 'Tema enigmatico' which proves to be the *Dies Irae* plainchant notated to be playable upside down and backwards as well. Most mysterious of all, 'Litany of the Galactic Bells' (Leo) is interrupted by a fragment of the *Hammerklavier Sonata*.

Once again the ear is almost convinced by the sounds Crumb extracts from the piano. Sometimes it is played conventionally, but more often it's used as sound resource: strings are plucked, stopped to obtain harmonics, chords silently depressed to create a resonant background. The effects are always diverting and Philip Mead was impressively efficient in meeting all the demands. Yet the nagging feeling remains that if you strip away the layers of allusion of quasi-religious ritual and astrological significance, and ignore the bewitching sonorities, then you are left with very little musical substance.

Ian Hamilton is ill.

Weekend Competition

No 2488 **Set by Tim Hopkins**

We are all familiar with Coghill's version of Chaucer. Could we instead have Chaucerian versions of any modern English (or American) poet? Maximum 15 lines; and do say whom you're translating. By 18 November.

Result of No 2485 **Set by Fatboy**

We asked you to devise apposite anagrams of the names of TV programmes.

Report **by The Hitch**

We did say *apposite*, and we did limit you to five attempts; so the seven pages of wholly irrelevant anagrams sent in by 'Meredith Gilpin of no fixed abode' received, I'm afraid, rather short shrift. His stuff was *very* neatly typed, though, so we showed it to the Lemon Kid, who gave a cryptic, acid smile of approval. (By the way if any of you want to get the lemon taken off hand-written entries, the only way to do so is to petition Spiro; if large numbers of you write in, well and good; if only a small persecutable minority, then – not all that good). You were on fine form this week and gratifyingly hostile to both Pam Ayres and *The Generation Game*. A quid a go and the special prize of a copy of Eric Partridge's *Dictionary of Catch Phrases* to W. J. Webster.

Rugby Special: Ugly ribscape
The Big Match: Thematic G.B.H.
The Dick Emery Show: The comedy we shir
Parkinson: Onan's prik

W. J. WEBSTER

The Hollywood Musical: Lousy
methodical hov
The Monday Film: Money-mad filth
Arena – Cinema: Inane camera
Film International: Terminal inflation

BOB SCOTT

The World of Pam Ayres: Flawed
sham poetry;
Poems? O, few! Art? Hardly!;
O, me, what dreary flops.

K. WYKE

Coronation Street: Socio-art; enter not

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I Claudius: U Suicidal
J. A. FRANKLIN

The Lively Arts: Vile tely trash
That's Life: Eats filth
CLAUDE SPETTIGUE

What the Papers Say: Hew at press apathy
Nationwide: Wan edition
MARCUS BOLT

Crossroads: Crass doors
Conservative Party Political Broadcast: Or does a Tory V.I.P. accept trivia, cant, balls?
ALLAN SCOTT

Krypton Factor: For potty crank
The Christians: The rich saints
ADAM KHAN

Bruce Forsyth and the Generation Game: See 'B' gyrating Anthea Redfern too much
Coronation Street: I.e. rotten actors on
FRANK ANDERSON

Are You Being Served: Yes, devouring a beer
The Dick Emery Show: Why re-do sick theme?
V. R. ORMEROD

The Virginian: Virgin he ain't!
The Pam Ayres Show: How me trash PAYES!
ROBERT BAIRD

Mastermind: Dim men's art
PETER PETERSON

Charlies' Angels: Rheal nice slags
T. J. SYMES

Open University: Ennui *is* poverty
DONALD J. JACKSON

The World of Pam Ayres: Does LWT pay 'er for ham?
M. WALKER

Tonight: On, tight
N. CLAVE

The Old Grey Whistle Test: Let's wheedle grotty hits
KEVIN MORRIS

The Rag Trade: Drag theatre
RICHARD NOAKES

Newsday: De yawns
J. E. MILLER

The Lively Arts in Performance: R. Harty loves pretence in a film
CHRIS PASS

Read All About It: A dull bore – A.I. Tat
ROBIN VICK

Top of the Pops: Spot the p . . . poof!
ERIC CIRCUIT

Bruce Forsyth and the Generation Game: Brute force meeting shy dragon Anthea
JOHN P. SPARROW

Stars on Sunday: Sounds naarsty
JACK DOCHERTY

Columbo: Loco bum
JONATHAN GUINNESS

Mastermind: Rest, dim man
A. G. COHN

Going for a Song: Goons foraging
J. Y. WATSON

Tony Miles

Chess

No 57 **Further Notes on Tilburg**

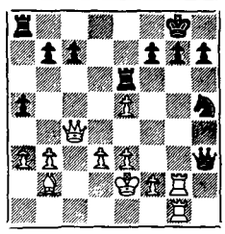
The tournament almost got off to a sensational start. In the first round, with five of the six games already drawn, the last game threatened to install the world champion in last place! After 34 moves Karpov – Timman reached the following position: **2r2r2/3n2kp/pq1P1ppp1/2pQp3/4P3/5N1P/P4RP1/5R1K.** Karpov had begun over-ambitiously and black was beginning to consolidate his extra pawn. So: **35. N-N5!? P x N; 36. Q-K6, K-R3; 37. R-B7, Q-N4! 38. K-R2, QR-K1; 39. Q-N4** (threatening P-R4), **Q x R; 40. R x Q, R x R; 41. Q x N, R(8)-B1; 42. Q-B6, R-Q1; 43. Q x BP, R-B3; 44. Q x P, R(1) x P; 45. P-QR4, R(Q)-K3; 46. Q-Q5, R-K1; 47. P-R5, R-B5; 48. Q-B6, R(1) x P; 49. Q x P, R-R5** – as adjourned. The unfortunate position of the black king prevents him from winning. **50. Q-N6, R-B1; 51. Q-N5, R-R8; 52. P-R4, P x P; 53. Q-Q5, R(B)-B8.** Draw agreed. In a subsequent interview Karpov opined that he was only clearly lost once in the midst of this. I find it hard to believe.

Two rounds later he was in even worse trouble: **White: G. Sosonko, Black: A. Karpov. 1. P-Q4, N-KB3; 2. P-QB4, P-K3; 3. P-KN3, P-Q4; 4. B-N2, P x P; 5. N-KB3, P-QR3; 6. 0-0, N-B3; 7. P-K3, N-QN5; 8. N-K5, P-B4; 9. P-QR3, QN-Q4; 10. P x P, Q-B2; 11. N x QBP, Q x BP; 12. P-N3, P-QN4; 13. N-R5, Q-B2; 14. P-QN4, B-N2; 15. P-K4, N-N3; 16. B-B4, P-K4; 17. N x B, R-B1; 18. Q-K2, KN-Q2; 19. N-B5, P x B; 20. N x P, Q-K4; 21. N-Q2** (black is a pawn down with a hopeless position. That he survived is little short of a miracle), **P x P; 22. RP x P, B-K2; 23. N-B3, Q-R4; 24. P-K5, N-B5; 25. P-K6, P x P; 26. Q x P, Q-B2; 27. N-N5, Q x Q; 28. N x Q, K-B2; 29. KR-K1, B-B3; 30. QR-Q1, N(Q2)-N3; 31. N(R6)-B7, N x P; 32. N-Q5, N(R6)-B4; 33. N x N, N x N; 34. R-Q6, R-QN1; 35. N-B7, KR-Q1; 36. N x P, B-K2; 37. R x R, R x R; 38. N-R7, B x P; 39. N-B6** Draw.

The 'worst endgame' prize was convincingly won by Balashov with the following effort against Gligoric: **8/1R1k1p2/4p3/4PbP1/3K4/8/1p2B3/1r6.** Having advanced his extra pawn to the seventh rank, Balashov decided to bring his king into the fray: **61. . . .K-B1; 62. R-N4, K-B2; 63. R-B4ch, K-Q2; 64. R-N4, K-B2; 65. R-B4ch, K-N3; 66. R-N4ch, K-B2** (at which point Gligoric brilliantly refrained from claiming a draw!) **67. R-B4ch, K-N3; 68. R-N4ch, K-R4; 69. R-N7, K-R5; 70. B-B4, B-B7; 71. K-B3, K-R6; 72. B-Q3!** Resigns!

Problem 57

White played 1. Q x P. Is this good, bad or indifferent, and how should the game continue? Answers to me at the NS postmarked not later than 16 November.

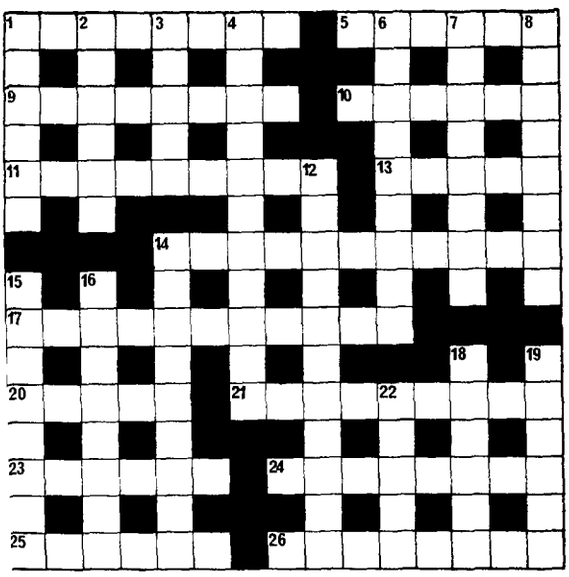


Solution to Problem 55

1. B x Nch, B x B; 2. P x P, B x N; 3. P-N7! and now B x QNP; 4. R x B followed by R(1)-B7 is hopeless and 3. . . .QR-N1 allows 4. . . .R-B8ch so black must lose material.

Weekend Crossword 1240

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1240, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 15 November.



ACROSS

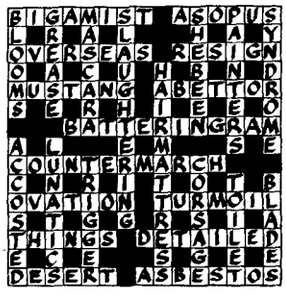
1. Beauty treatment for a chap I make better (8).
5. Circle in which king is held by subject (6).
9. Calm side disturbed by what the orator does (8).
10. Spells of writing after holiday places (6).
11. As a saviour I came and sins were reformed (9).
13. 'Long as my ——, sweet as my revenge!' (*Coriolanus*) (5).
14. One town having its foundations in front of another (11).
17. Moved powerlessly (11).
20. Just when love loses its head (5).
21. Two ordeals in one match (4, 5).
23. How riding makes one a woman (6).
24. Once evil is let loose, excessive force is needed (8).
25. Shed or refuse heartlessly (6).
26. Targets needed lest upset after a bit of fun (8).

DOWN

1. Women who take unregenerate human nature to heart (6).
2. Most precise and even in a panic estimated correctly (6).
3. Animal which provides one with something to wear in front (5).
4. Reminding me not long ago about cars (11).
6. Force down in the grass when frustrated (9).
7. Although immortal he may be poisoned (8).
8. What the scattered seed cost when nursed? (8).
12. Its maker performed his ablutions with two others (11).
14. What the old soldier drew is part of a ship with a town behind it (9).
15. The Queen is in the distance making a presentation (8).
16. With long ears one can get into such a state! (8).
18. Name of two individuals in the fifties (6).
19. Ancestral trees? (6).
22. Available if one is not in the loo (2, 3).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1238



Prizewinners to No 1238

Ruth Toye (Port Marly)

Jack Padwa (Tel Aviv)

John M. Brown (Burton/Trent)

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APPOINTMENTS

TRADE UNION RESEARCH OFFICER

The Society of Civil and Public Servants, which represents over 105,000 members in the Civil Service, Post Office and elsewhere, invites applications for the position of Research Officer in the Research Department at HEO level. The Research Officer will contribute to the overall research effort, and will be responsible to the Head of Research. The post will involve preparation of policy and advisory papers for the Senior Secretariat, and providing general support for national negotiations. The Research Officer will be expected to take primary responsibility for research service in certain areas and work direct to the Deputy General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary (Negotiating) on such subjects as personnel management, computers, and health and safety. The successful candidate will be expected, however, to be prepared to contribute to the work of the Research Department in all areas as required.

The Research Officer will also be expected to give guidance to the temporary Research Assistant in the Research Officer's main areas of work, in drafting replies to letters etc. and preparing the annual report.

The successful candidate should be committed to trade union work, capable of preparing policy papers under pressure, and ready to work as part of a team. Preference will be given to candidates who have experience of trade union research or negotiating work, relevant academic qualifications, or some knowledge of industrial relations in the civil and public services.

The salary scale is £3,900 - £4,700 p.a. plus Inner London Weighting of £465 and Pay Supplements of £313 and £208 p.a. Annual leave is 30 days.

Applications should be sent to: the **General Secretary, Society of Civil & Public Servants, 124-130 Southwark Street, London SE1 0TU** by **Thursday, 10 November 1977,** enclosing curriculum vitae with details of education, employment history, trade union experience and other relevant information. **Short-listed candidates will be interviewed on Monday, 14 November.** Applicants should give a telephone number where they can be contacted for notification of whether they are required for interview.

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GENERAL TREASURER (DESIGNATE)

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PARLIAMENTARY LIAISON OFFICER

Age Concern England, a progressive national charity working for the elderly both nationally and through local voluntary groups, is looking for a new officer to work within Parliament on policy and campaigning issues. The post would involve close co-ordination with the All-Party Pensioners Group of MPs and the various national bodies working on behalf of the elderly.

The successful applicant would be attached to the Information Department at Age Concern and would be expected to act as part of a team. It is essential that applicants should be able to write clearly and concisely. This post would be ideal for a person with some experience of political affairs and information work. The successful applicant must be able to work amicably with others of various political beliefs.

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Further details and application form from: **Administrative Secretary, Age Concern England, 60 Pitcairn Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3LL.**

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Vol 94 No 2433

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Meetings

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON (Gower Street, WC1E 6BT). Free Public Lectures, Autumn Term 1977. Wed. 30 Nov. at 5.30, William Townsend Memorial Lecture by Professor Richard Wollheim, 'Adrian Stokes: Critic, Painter, Poet'. Thurs. 1 Dec. at 5.30, Neale Lecture in English History by Professor A. G. Dickens, 'The Early English Protestants — a social survey'. Complete list of public lectures from Publications Office, University College London, Gower St. WC1E 6BT. (Stamped envelope required.)

DISCUSSION MEETINGS: 6.30 p.m. Tuesdays in November. Adm. 10p. Tea from 5.45 p.m. 8 Nov. Christopher Jones 'Getting Away from Mechanical Thinking'; 15 Nov. Dr Fred. Kissin 'Eurocommunism'; 22 Nov. Michael Fleming 'The Past, Present & Future of Money'; 29 Nov. Dr Charlotte Wolff 'Bisexuality'. South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq. WC1.

JEAN MALAURIE, Directeur du Centre d'Etudes Arctiques, will give a lecture on 'De la Sibérie au Groënland. Les peuples face à leur destin' on Tuesday 8 November at 6.15 p.m. at the French Institute, Queensberry Place, SW7. Tel.: 01-589 6211 ext. 38. Admission free.

SUSTAINING THE ONE PARENT FAMILY —The Role of Local Authorities. Seminar addressed by Professor Roy Parker, Dr Miriam David and Dr Valerie Karn, on 23 November, 11.45 a.m. to 4.30 pm. at Caxton Hall, London SW1. Admission £2 (Students 50p.) Tickets must be purchased in advance from National Council for One Parent Families, 255 Kentish Town Road, London NW5 2LX. Tel. 01-267 1361.

FREE THOUGHT & THE FREE PRESS, talk by Nicolas Walter, London Young Humanists, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, W8. Sun. 6 Nov. 7.30 p.m. Adm. 30p.

'THE MYTH OF GOD INCARNATE' controversy. John Austin Baker speaks to the William Temple Association (London Branch), Wed. 9 Nov. 7.30 for 8. Liddon House, 24 South Audley Street, W1.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE, 23 Norfolk Sq., W1. Sun. 6 Nov. Swami Bhavyananda on 'The Message of the Upanishads' at 5 p.m. All welcome.

BUDDHIST SOCIETY, 58 Eccleston Square, London SW1. Sat. 5 Nov. 3 p.m. 'Open Day'. Tues. 8 Nov. 6.30 p.m. 'Introducing Buddhism'. Wed. 9 Nov. 6.30 p.m. Tibetan *Buddhism and Theravada Buddhism*, two study classes. All welc. S.a.e. for full prog.

THEOSOPHY. Simple talks for inquirers: Sun. 6 Nov. 8 p.m. 'Man the Unknown'. S.a.e. free pamphlet, programme, booklist. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2.

The British Sociological Association

RACE AND RESIDENCE IN THE INNER CITY

One day conference on Saturday, 3 December, 1977, at Bedford College, London.

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For further details and registration forms, please contact **Jane Hoy at the BSA, 13 Endsleigh St, London WC1 0DJ. Tel. 01-387 3627.**

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON, Gower St, WC1E 6BT. Lunch Hour Lectures, 1.20 to 2. Admission free. 8 Nov. 'Data isn't what they were!' by Professor Randolph Quirk; 10 Nov. 'Seventy Years of Human Genetics at University College' by Professor H. Kalmus.

A SOCIALIST PHILOSOPHY for the 80s. Fabian Society Autumn Lectures. Peter Townsend (3 Nov.); David Owen (8 Nov.). The first lecture at Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton St. SW1. The second lecture at Central Hall, Westminster, SW1. Both at 7.30 p.m. Tickets 60p each from Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth St, SW1. 930 3077.

SHAW SOCIETY. Friday 11 November, 6.30 p.m. at Conway Hall. Barbara Smoker on 'Some Unpublished Shaw'.

Liberals and the Commonwealth

Speaker: The Rt Hon Jeremy Thorpe MP
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